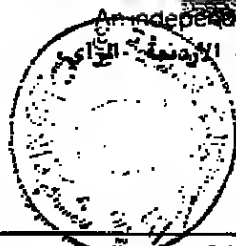


Majali meets World Bank official

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Saturday received Deputy President of the World Bank for the Middle East and North Africa Kamal Darwish. Dr Abdul Salam discussed with Jordan's relations with the World Bank. The prime minister stressed the need to support Jordan in order to enable it carry out its reform programme, voicing hope the World Bank would extend assistance to the kingdom to launch small projects in order to lessen poverty and unemployment. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Anani and Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf.

Jordan Times



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Premier, Maher Masri hold talks

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Palestinian Minister of Trade Maher Masri on Saturday held talks on trade relations and economic cooperation. Dr. Majali stressed in the meeting Jordan's support for all efforts in order to reach a just comprehensive peace in the region and enable the Palestinians regain their legitimate rights on their national soil. The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said, Mr. Masri was on his way home after leading a business delegation which attended a Palestinian trade exhibition in the United Arab Emirates.

Regent, Majali indicate government focus is on internal issues as well as efforts to end crisis in peace process

AMMAN (J.T.) — The new government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali faces serious tasks and responsibilities in reconstruction and improvements in economic and social fields on the domestic front. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, said Saturday.

Speaking after a visit to the Prime Ministry where he congratulated Dr. Majali over his appointment as prime minister, the Regent added that "there is also concern over the peace process, especially in the light of the latest events which constitute a real challenge."

"We are closely following up the developments in Hebron and we are calling for dialogue and a refrain from any form of violence which should not be allowed to prevail and affect the peace process," added the Regent.

His Majesty King Hussein, who has begun a visit to the U.S., will be making efforts to bring the peace process back on track in talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton, the Regent said.

"King Hussein enjoys



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, talks to the press after a meeting with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Saturday (photo by Boghos)

very high international credibility and we hope to see tension easing in this region through his wisdom and good efforts during his current important visit to the U.S.," the Regent added.

In an obvious reference to last week's shooting at Baqoura and Friday's bomb blast in Tel Aviv, the Regent said: "Acts of violence aim at upsetting the peace process, and I believe that the King's visit to the U.S. will offer him a chance to review all the issues of the

Middle East region in a comprehensive manner."

The Regent, who was accompanied by Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh and Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, passed directives to the new government on the coming stage and the implementation of King Hussein's directives as contained in the letter of designation to Dr. Majali.

Dr. Majali told the press after the meeting that the general elections will be held on schedule and noted

that King Hussein was clear in his directives about the need for holding the elections on schedule.

Dr. Majali earlier headed a Cabinet meeting and reviewed a range of domestic and other issues.

Dr. Majali told the ministers that they should work as a team in handling issues connected with improving the living conditions of the Jordanian people and to decentralise administration and simplify procedures.

Dr. Majali said that the government was dedicating efforts to develop economic, trade, tourist and services sectors and encouraging investments and giving due support for the private sector.

During the Cabinet session two ministerial teams were created, one for overseeing services headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Administrative Development Abdullah Ensour and the other to oversee issues pertaining to development headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Development Affairs Jawad Anani.

(Continued on page 7)



Palestinian police attempt to stop Palestinian protesters throwing stones at Israeli soldiers during fierce clashes in the West Bank town of Hebron on Saturday. Violence erupted in the town for the second straight day over Israeli settlement plans in Arab East Jerusalem (Reuters photo)

Fierce clashes erupt in Hebron; dozens injured

HEBRON (Agencies) — Israeli troops fired live bullets and tear gas Saturday wounding dozens of Palestinian stone-throwers in the worst clash in this West Bank city in months.

Twenty-seven Palestinians were taken to hospitals in Hebron with wounds from live ammunition and another 80 were hospitalized with injuries from rubber bullets and tear gas, hospital officials said.

Five Israeli soldiers were also injured from stone throwing.

The clashes erupted one day after a member of the militant Hamas group, from a village near Hebron, set off an explosion at a Tel Aviv cafe which killed three Israeli women.

Palestinian stone-throwers engaged in heavy clashes with Israeli troops for a second day Saturday. "We don't want peace, we want Hamas," chanted the crowd of several hundred Palestinians. Some threw fire-bombs at soldiers, who at first fired tear gas, rubber bullets and stun grenades

and later used live ammunition, eye witnesses said. Hundreds of youths shouting "allahu akbar" ran past Palestinian police and hurled petrol bombs and rocks at Israeli soldiers as the violence spread to several Hebron streets, witnesses said.

Order was briefly restored with the arrival at the scene of Jibril Rajoub, the Palestinian security chief in the West Bank, with Palestinian police reinforcements.

But hundreds of Palestinian students then flocked to the line and began throwing stones at Israeli troops, witnesses said.

"Additional Israeli forces were sent to the city along with a message to Palestinian security officials that they must prevent unrest in areas under their control," an Israeli military source said.

Palestinian policemen were also among the injured. Palestinians pelted soldiers and military vehicles

Arafat, Netanyahu try to save peace process

Combined agency dispatches

EFFORTS BY Israeli and Palestinian leaders to keep the peace process alive despite the deadly bombing in Tel Aviv were overshadowed Saturday by violent clashes in the West Bank.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat spoke on the phone late Friday after the suicide bombing for the first time since the crisis sparked by the start of construction Tuesday of a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

Mr. Netanyahu, who accused Mr. Arafat of bearing a "heavy responsibility" for Friday's suicide bombing by a suspected Palestinian militant, called on him to prove that he still wants peace.

The Israeli leader also resisted calls from within his right-wing coalition to break off talks with the Palestinians.

"We are going to see very quickly if the Palestinian Authority is a peace partner — it must choose between peace and terrorism," Mr. Netanyahu said.

Mr. Arafat on Saturday denounced the bombing at a crowded Tel Aviv cafe, which killed three Israelis and wounded 46.

"This terrible act we condemn completely," Mr. Arafat said in an interview at his Gaza City office.

Mr. Arafat also said he would respond to a reported call for more suicide bombings by Hamas military leader Ibrahim Al Mukadmeh, who has gone into hiding following

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued on page 7)

King enters Mayo Clinic

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein was admitted to Mayo Clinic on Saturday for routine medical checkups immediately after the King and Her Majesty Queen Noor arrived at Rochester, Minnesota, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

After the checkups, the King will travel to Washington for talks with President Bill Clinton and senior administration officials on the latest developments in the Middle East peace process and means to resolve the crisis in the Palestinian-Israeli track of negotiations.

The King's White House talks are tentatively set for March 28 or April 4, reports from Washington said.

The King will also review with American officials Jordanian-American relations and economic and military cooperation and meet leading Jewish leaders in the U.S.

The King underwent a successful cancer surgery at Mayo Clinic in August 1992 and has since undergone regular checkups which have given him a clean bill of health.

Regent calls on Arab states to take initiative for regional rehabilitation, avoid decisions imposed by others

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Saturday called on Arab countries to take active part in efforts "for the rehabilitation of the Middle East in a manner that would safeguard the nation's interests rather than leave this matter to others who impose their will on us."

In a lecture at the Royal War College attended by senior officers, the Regent called on intellectuals from Jordan and other Arab states to launch "a fruitful and constructive dialogue over issues of common concern to the Arab Nation and questions of security, stability and development, free from any negative attitudes or pre-adopted positions."

"A Middle East cooperative system will create the necessary climate for the development of this region and for its countries' economic, social and political prosperity and will pave the ground for Arab unity," said Prince Hassan.

But he noted: "A new concept for the Middle East cannot be achieved without guaranteeing security and peace in a manner that would take care of all the region's issues."

He said that Jordan was consistently involved in initiatives to achieve these goals.

"We realise that the road ahead for achieving comprehensive and just peace is fraught with danger but a comprehensive concept of questions of security and peace at the national, regional and international levels is something substantial and basic," he said.

He said the Arabs should achieve a qualitative step forward to help them deal with developments and changes in the modern age. "We are in dire need of creative minds and new approaches that would help us to coexist with others in this modern age," he said.

"The Hashemite leadership has been consecrating its efforts towards the aspired Arab unity," he said, noting that the late King Abdullah, founder of the Kingdom, backed by many of the Great Arab Revolt leaders, had wanted to see Jordan as "the beginning of the pan-Arab project and an embodiment of the Arab nation's dream of unity, freedom and a better life which together constitute the message of the Great Arab Renaissance."

"Jordan's contacts and links

with other Arab countries have always been characterised by its positive, courageous and honest dealings and enthusiasm towards Arab causes. Arab solidarity and unity of Arab ranks," said the Regent.

"Jordan has sought to achieve a peaceful settlement based on international legitimacy to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their rights to self-determination and sovereignty on their national soil and also to achieve comprehensive settlement on all tracks," Prince Hassan said.

The Regent described the recent decision to create a pan-Arab free trade zone, as "a positive sign of Arab awareness of the importance of economic cooperation at the regional and international levels."

Palestinian leader and Musa assail latest U.S. veto at Security Council

Combined agency dispatches

PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT Yasser Arafat on Saturday accused Washington of violating its commitments to the peace process by vetoing a U.N. Security Council resolution against Israeli settlement construction in Arab East Jerusalem.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, meanwhile, said the U.S. case for opposing the resolution to halt construction on a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem was "unacceptable."

"We were surprised just like all the Arabs and Muslims by the American veto," said Mr. Arafat during a stop-over in the Omani capital of Muscat on his way to an Islamic summit in Islamabad.

"The United States had guaranteed in Madrid that there would be no demographic changes to the Palestinian territories, especially in Jerusalem, during the interim period," he told reporters.

"This is a violation of the American guarantees," Mr. Arafat said, referring to the launch of the U.S.-sponsored autonomy process at the October 1991 Middle East peace conference in the Spanish capital.

The issue of Jerusalem will be "one of the main subjects" at the summit of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) opening Sunday, he said.

Mr. Musa, who was already in the Pakistani capital on Saturday, said that "whatever the reasons given by the United States to justify its position, they are unacceptable."

The U.S. veto was "deplorable and undermines people's confidence in it, both inside the Arab World and outside," said

the minister, quoted by Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA).

Mr. Musa said the United States should have supported a similar resolution on March 7, instead of using a veto a first time, because it has since failed to persuade Israel to halt its construction of the so-called Har Homa settlement.

The United States on Friday used its Security Council veto for the second time in two weeks to block a resolution calling on Israel to halt the work which it started three days earlier.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Bill Richardson, said the United States was not the right forum for Middle East issues which "can only be resolved by the parties themselves."

Security Council "interference" could "only harden the existing tensions in the region," he argued.

The latest vote came just hours after a Palestinian militant blew himself up at a cafe in Tel Aviv, killing three Israeli women, in retaliation for the settlement project.

The vote on the draft, sponsored by Egypt and Qatar, was 13 in favour, with the United States casting the lone negative vote and Costa Rica abstaining.

Egypt is the council's only Arab member while Qatar is current chairman of the 22-member Arab group.

On March 7 the United States vetoed a resolution, supported by all 14 other council members, calling on Israel to abandon plans to build Jewish housing on Jahal Abu Ghneim, which Israelis call Har Homa.

The United States, chief sponsor of Middle East peace negotiations, has

(Continued on page 7)

No strain in Jordanian-Iraqi ties, Aziz says after talks with Majali

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz said Saturday that his country's relations with Jordan were improving and denied any strain in ties between the two countries.

Mr. Aziz, who was speaking to reporters after a meeting with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, added that reports of tension in relations between the two countries were unfounded.

"Personally, I believe that there was no tension in relations between Jordan and Iraq," said Mr. Aziz, who arrived from Brussels en route to Baghdad.

"Maybe, if there was tension it was fabricated. There is a difference between tension and fabricated tension," Mr. Aziz said following the 30-minute encounter with Dr. Majali.

Mr. Aziz's comments express Baghdad's desire to strengthen ties with Amman.

The Kingdom's decision to grant asylum to Iraqi

defectors in August 1995, including senior Iraqi army officers, and to allow an Iraqi opposition group to open an office in Amman have caused strain in relations.

But Saturday's meeting between Mr. Aziz and Dr. Majali was a strong indication that Iraq was willing to improve ties with its one-time ally.

"Relations between the two countries have been brotherly, cordial and beneficial to both sides," Mr. Aziz said.

"All over the period since

the early seventies and eighties and until now relations remained good. Now with Mr. Majali and with his vast experience in the realm of cooperation between the two countries, I'm certain that we could proceed further to develop the bilateral relations," he added.

The veteran Iraqi diplomat said that he was pleased by Dr. Majali's appointment as prime minister and said that he was "confident that the

(Continued on page 7)



STRIKE IN LEBANON: Palestinians give the victory sign as smoke billows from burning tyres behind, on Saturday. Palestinian guerrillas, brandishing AK-47 assault rifles, burned tyres at 'Ain Al Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp near the port city of Sidon in South Lebanon. Palestinian refugees in South Lebanon observed on Saturday a general strike to protest Israel's building of a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem (Reuters photo)

Gulf papers blame Netanyahu for crisis

DUBAI (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has only himself to blame for the Tel Aviv Bombing because he has pushed the peace process to "the edge of the abyss," Gulf Arab newspapers charged Saturday.

"Netanyahu is fully responsible for the Tel Aviv explosion. Since he came to power, he has not stopped provoking his partners to sabotage the peace process," said Al Sharq newspaper in Qatar.

"Instead of making accu-

sations against the Palestinian Authority, Netanyahu should look for the real reasons for the renewed violence since his decision to build a Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem," it said.

A Palestinian suicide bombing in a central Tel Aviv cafe on Friday left three Israelis dead and 46 injured.

The militant group Hamas group claimed the attack, saying it was in retaliation for Israel's decision to start building a new settlement for 30,000 Jews

in Arab East Jerusalem. Al Watan daily, also in Qatar, warned that anti-Israeli attacks would "continue if Israel does not stop harassing the Palestinians and fails to respect its commitment to peace accords."

In Kuwait, Al Rai Al Aam said: "We can not sympathize with a kamikaze who blow himself up in the midst of civilians."

But the Israeli leader "must understand that a dangerous game Netanyahu is playing," asked Al Ithad newspaper in the United Arab Emirates.

The Palestinian Authority's room for manoeuvre, all he's doing is provoking the extremists..."

"The peace process is at the edge of the abyss," it said, accusing the United States of "abandoning its role as an honest broker and allying itself with Israel" by using its veto at the U.N. Security Council.

"Does the United States understand what a dangerous game Netanyahu is playing?" asked Al Ithad newspaper in the United Arab Emirates.

Thirty massacred in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — Thirty to 32 civilians had their throats slit or were hacked to death with axes in a village south of here in a fresh massacre blamed on militants, liberte and Al Watan newspapers said Saturday.

Thirteen armed militants were killed the same day, Wednesday. Eight of them were killed in Naciria, 70 kilometres east of the capital, when a bomb they were carrying exploded, and the other five in a raid by security forces in the el madania district of algiers.

The civilian massacre was in the village of ouled antar near Ksar Boukhari, about 150 kilometres south of Algiers. It was the first massacre carried out in full daylight, Al Watan. Other such atrocities in Algeria's civil war have been committed at night.

The reports said about 30 assailants armed with shotguns, axes and knives descended on the village, inhabited by farmers and their families, in early afternoon. Within a half-hour, they had methodically cut down about 32 people, including 16 women and an adolescent, from four families. Some of the victims were finished off with an axe after they refused to leave their homes, Al Watan said.

The assailants ransacked the houses before fleeing.

The incident in Naciria, meanwhile, occurred on the road between Algiers and Tizi-Ouzou, the main town in the Grande Kabylie region east of the capital. The eight men were blown apart when the gas bomb they were transporting went off late Wednesday.

Al Watan said the bomb was probably destined for a train that shuttles between the capital and Tizi-Ouzou, which has already been hit with a string of sabotage explosions by insurgents.

The Kabylie region, home to Algeria's indigenous berber population, is particularly strong in its resistance to armed militants who began waging war on the authorities after the army intervened in January 1992 to cancel the second round of general elections the now outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win.

Al Watan quoted a witness as saying the eight men could not be identified but their number was determined by counting the shoes scattered at the sight of the blast.

The reports said the five militants killed in the capital were members of the Islamic Front of the Armed Jihad, killed in their hide-out in a working-class district of Algiers.

Bashir rejects rivals' demand for pluralism

ABU DHABI (Agencies) — Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir said Saturday he accepted a United Arab Emirates (UAE) bid to halt the civil war but rejected a key demand by the opposition for ending the one-party rule.

Lieutenant General Bashir, who is visiting the UAE on his way for the Islamic summit in Pakistan next week, repeated accusations that Ugandan forces and foreign mercenaries were invading Sudan.

"We are ready for a reconciliation with the opposition," he told reporters at the end of his two-day visit to the UAE.

"We have common concepts, including the Islamic trend, the unity of Sudan and the federal system. But we differ with them on the pluralistic system."

During a visit to Abu Dhabi in February, Sudan's main opposition leader, Sadeq Al Mahdi, insisted breaking the totalitarian system in Sudan was a prerequisite for any reconciliation in the impoverished country.

Mr. Mahdi, who has formed an alliance with John Garang, leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), also called for a four-year transitional period and a referendum on the future of Sudan.

Sudan's opposition umbrella grouping, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), has rejected reconciliation with the regime in Khartoum, according to a statement released after a four-day meeting of its supreme council.

Western diplomats say Gen. Bashir's government is worried about significant gains made by the Sudanese rebels in the east and south since January — the most successful offensive since 1983.

Sudan said recently it has accepted in principle a mediation offer by the UAE, but was waiting for Abu Dhabi to send an envoy to Khartoum to outline the bid before taking a

final stand. The opposition said it would only accept initiatives towards peace within the framework of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD), which comprises seven east African countries (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda).

"IGAD's agreement is the only frame of reference," the statement said.

During a press conference Friday in Asmara, General Fethi Ahmad Ali, vice-president of the NDA, said the supreme council had taken resolutions based on two points: the strengthening of the struggle to topple the Khartoum regime, and the consideration of what to do after that regime is gone.

"The NDA is not only an opposition force but an alternative to the present government," said Mansur Khaleel, an SPLA representative present at the meeting.

Gen. Bashir met UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan and other officials before leaving to attend the Islamic summit scheduled to open in Pakistan on Sunday, they added.

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Egyptian ship missing

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian cargo vessel has mysteriously disappeared in the Mediterranean Sea between Malta and the Libyan coast with 12 crew members on board, the operator said on Saturday.

BP commercial and shipping company director Samir Al Badran said his firm has been without news of the cargo ship Samir since March 11, when it was due to arrive at the Sicilian port of Trapani.

"In the absence of any information, anything is possible — a pirate attack, a sinking or seizure by one of the countries on the sea," he said.

The 2,850-tonne vessel, flying a Cyprus flag and operated by an all-Egyptian crew, left the Mediterranean port of Alexandria on March 7 carrying a cargo of salt for Sicily, Mr. Badran said.

"During the last radio contact between the vessel and

another boat, the captain said everything was going well and that he should arrive at the port on the scheduled date," he added.

"The ship did not transmit any signals of distress or breakdown," adding that aircraft from Italy and Malta as well as U.S. and Dutch fleets in the Mediterranean had conducted several search missions in vain.

"We have launched a humanitarian appeal to Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi to order his air fleets to search near the Libyan coast, where the boat could have been pushed by the winds," said Mr. Badran.

He said it would be strange if the Samir had sunk without launching any distress calls, adding that pirates do not usually seize boats but instead go aboard armed, pillage their contents and then flee, leaving the crews alive.

Cyprus pushes for EU talks

NICOSIA (R) — Cyprus will push for resuming a political dialogue with the European Union (EU) that stalled last month, its foreign minister said on Friday.

A dialogue with the divided island was put on hold after disagreements between Greece and the other 14 EU members on the role of Turkish Cypriots in accession negotiations blocked the issuing of an EU position statement.

"We will submit a suggestion, as Cyprus, to all the member states on what we suggest as far as the common statement is concerned," Cypriot Foreign Minister Alecos Michaelides told reporters.

"It is something we consider should be clarified, not be left open to different interpretations," he said.

Cyprus is due to start EU entry talks next year.

"The negotiations must be

with the Cyprus government," said Mr. Michaelides but the "door was open" to Turkish Cypriot groups to monitor the process under an agreed procedure.

Cyprus has been divided since 1974 when Turkey invaded its northern third after a brief Greek Cypriot coup engineered by the military ruling Greece. A Turkish Cypriot breakaway state in the north is recognised only by Ankara, which has some 30,000 troops deployed there.

The international community, with the exception of Turkey, recognises the Greek Cypriot administration as the island's only government.

This month the United Nations started a new round of proximity talks between the two sides aimed at preparing direct negotiations between the leaders of the two communities.

JORDAN TELEVISION

PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 ...Cartoon — Jimmy Quest
14:30 ...Cartoon — Problem Child
15:00 ...French Programmes
16:00 ...Doc — Global Family
16:25 ...Energy Express
16:50 ...Doc — Our World, Their World
17:15 ...All Our Children
18:00 ...French Programmes
19:30 ...News Headlines
19:35 ...Comedy — Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
20:00 ...Doc — World Echo
20:30 ...Medical Drama — Side Effects
21:10 ...Doc — Tycoons
22:00 ...News in English
22:25 ...Hot Shots
23:00 ...Sisters

PRAYER TIMES

04:13 ...Fajr
05:31 ...Sunrise/Duha
11:42 ...Dhuhr
15:11 ...Asr
17:53 ...Maghreb
19:10 ...Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweithel Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terre Santa Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

ARMENIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH TEL. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Arman International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

Deserts...05/14
Jordan Valley...09/18

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 11, Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 99 per cent, Aqaba 37 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Mazharah...820425
Dr. Wissam Hziyayn...748563
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyim...620115
Dr. Munther Al Qaraini...779959
Firas pharmacy...661912
Ferdows pharmacy...778336
Al Asema pharmacy...657055
Nairosh pharmacy...623672
Al Salam pharmacy...636730
Yacoub pharmacy...644945
Shmeisani pharmacy...637660
Najib pharmacy...847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir...276852
Al Quds pharmacy...985417

ZARQA:
Dr. Ziyad Jghaitim...992991
Khalifeh pharmacy...985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre...637111
Civil Defence Department...661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue...630341
Civil Defence Emergency...199
Rescue Police...192.621111.637777
Fire Brigade...617101
Blood Bank...775121
Highway Police...843402
Traffic Police...896390
Public Security Dept...630321
Hotel Complaints...605800
Price Complaints...661176
Water & Sewage Complaints...897467
Amman Municipality Complaints...787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)...121
Overseas Calls...010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs...623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs...661101
Jordan Television...773111
Radio Jordan...774111
Water Authority...680100
J. Electricity Authority...815615
Electric Power Co...636381
RJ Flight Information...08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport...08-53200

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir...276852
Al Quds pharmacy...985417

ZARQA:
Dr. Ziyad Jghaitim...992991
Khalifeh pharmacy...985417

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre...813813/32
Khalidi Maternity...642811/62
Akileh Maternity...642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity...642362
Malhas J. Amman...636140
Palestine, Shmeisani...607071
Shmeisani pharmacy...669131
University Hospital...845845

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir...276852
Al Quds pharmacy...985417

ZARQA:
Dr. Ziyad Jghaitim...992991
Khalifeh pharmacy...985417

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Akileh Maternity...642441/2
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Princess announces programme of gift distribution for needy children

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Orphanages and some poor, homeless and disabled children in the Kingdom are to receive clothes and toys during Eid Al Adha, distributed by the Jordan River for Development Projects (JRDP), which is planning to launch an Eid donation campaign.

"Studies and statistics indicate that almost 400,000 children live below the poverty level, and we are hoping that through this campaign we might reach a high number of them," HRH Princess Rania Al Abdullah Saturday said in a press conference.



HRH Princess Rania addresses a press conference regarding a gift distribution programme for needy children and orphans (Petra photo)

She stated that the JRDP gesture came with the increase in awareness of children's conditions, notably the plight of orphans.

In early March, His Majesty King Hussein visited Al Hussein Welfare Institute and expressed his dismay over the foundation's condition and performance.

The King criticised a low standard of health care, malnutrition, lack of cleanliness, shortage of clothes, lack of basic requirements and lack of qualified people to run and help the orphanage in that organisation.

"Following the orphanage problem, we felt that many people wanted to give something but did not exactly know how," the Princess said.

"So we decided to help them by launching a ten-day campaign to gather in-kind and financial donations to later be distributed to the children during the second week of April," the

Princess added.

She stated that the JRDP contacted charitable societies, gathered names of needy children and formed a committee to supervise distribution.

The dilemma is "that toys and goods are available but good supervision and management has been lacking," Princess Rania said.

The Princess, who is the president of the JRDP board of directors, emphasised that she will personally supervise the distribution operation.

"We want to assure donors that they can rest assured that their offerings will be properly distributed," she said. "They can even accompany us when we start distributing the donations."

According to Princess Rania, the clothes and toys collecting campaign for children will be conducted annually.

Hana Shahin, director of the JRDP, said that the

institute is working jointly with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on establishing both a short and a long-term programme designed to tackle child abuse in Jordan.

She added that a three-day workshop, to implement the joint project, will be held next Tuesday where working groups can focus on recommending a tangible plan of action.

"We realised that child abuse in Jordan is on the increase and decided to help increase people's awareness of the problem and try to find solutions," Ms. Shahin said.

Established in January 1996 as a non-profit volunteer society, the JRDP aims at improving the financial, cultural, social, educational, technical skills and health and well-being of the community at large as well as creating jobs, especially among underprivileged women.

Minister calls for promoting trade relations with Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Trade and Industry Hani Mulki Saturday called for promoting trade relations with Iraq, stating that Iraq is a major market for Jordanian goods.

In a meeting with Iraqi President of the Chambers of Industry Adnan Qodsi, Dr. Mulki stressed that trade exchange between Jordan and Iraq is far less than "both countries' aspirations."

Dr. Mulki called for alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people and extended Jordanian assistance in terms of transport facilities to the Iraqis.

He also promised to review obstacles hindering the flow of Jordanian goods to the Iraqi market.

The meeting was attended by President of the Amman Chamber of Industry Khaldoun Abu Hassan.

The Iraqi delegation also met with Jordan Exports Development and Commercial Centres Corporation President Mohammad Halayqah and discussed Jordanian participation in the annual Baghdad International Exhibition.

Drug trafficking records major increase in 1996

AMMAN (Petra) — The anti-narcotics and forgery department Saturday announced that drug-trafficking in Jordan last year increased by 32.2 per cent over the past four years.

Department Director Nazih Shreideh affirmed that in 1996 there were 326 drug-related cases, including trafficking, possession and usage.

He maintained that his department has been increasing efforts to combat drug-trafficking both at national levels and abroad, the latter through close cooperation with other governments.

Col. Shreideh maintained that last year a total of 68 kilograms of heroin was seized as compared to a total of 36 kilograms in the past four years — an increase of 188.8 per cent.

He surmised that this statistic infers a shift to heroin as the drug is easily concealed and brings increased returns due to its higher price.

Col. Shreideh stated that 43 kilograms of

opium were smuggled into the country last year up from a total of 11 kilograms over the past four years, while caption pills totalled at five million as opposed to two million over the previous four years.

However, Col. Shreideh did affirm that his department seized 1,348 kilograms of hashish in 1996 as compared to 12,556 kilograms over the past four years.

He attributed the decline to a drop in hashish production in Lebanon which country, he said, is the main source of the drug.

He also noted that last year his department detained 300 drug users but that his department was developing measures to better treat addicted persons.

He said that his department provided treatment to 67 addicted persons in conjunction with the Ministry of Health.

Col. Shreideh also mentioned 37 cases of forgery in which 77 persons were involved last year and

stated that the total amount of forged currency seized was 250 Jordanian dinars, 1,800 Saudi riyals, 851,300 U.S. dollars, 5,000 Iranian riyals and 500 UAE dirhams.

He also maintained that his department last year dealt with six cases of forged documents in which nine persons were involved.

These, he said, included three Jordanian passports, three Saudi passports, two birth certificates, a driving licence, and vehicle licences.

Col. Shreideh also stated that last year his department confiscated 23 automatic rifles and 27 revolvers in addition to ammunition.

He said that border posts are being strengthened and personnel trained to deal with drug trafficking and other forms of smuggling and that advanced equipment is being used to identify possible smugglers.

Col. Shreideh described his department as closely cooperating with foreign

countries to ameliorate the situation.

Man stabbed in Shmeisani

Meanwhile, police Saturday detained a man who allegedly attacked a jewellery shop-owner and stabbed him with a knife in an attempt to rob the Shmeisani shop.

A police official said that the man entered the jewellery shop, located near the Burge Area at around 10:15 a.m., drew a knife and stabbed the shop-owner in the neck.

Bystanders came to the rescue, the official maintained, and managed to overpower the man and take his knife and held him until police arrived.

Officials refused to release the names and ages of both the suspect and victim, the latter of whom has been listed in fair condition.

Police said they were investigating the incident.

Minister pledges to improve water services

By Tanya Habjouqa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — On the occasion of International Water Day and in his first press conference, Minister of Water and Irrigation Munther Haddadin Saturday pledged to improve water provision services.

Dr. Haddadin maintained that his ministry is currently studying methods to provide water from Al Deisi region, decrease artesian well water waste, and utilise flood waters.

He announced plans to provide a cost-effective service by working with the private sector

in matters concerning administration, collection, maintenance, and operation.

The minister stressed the importance of cooperation between citizens and state to combat overconsumption of the Kingdom's water resources.

Dr. Haddadin asserted that the ministry is closely following pollution violations in the Jordan River and warned that violators would be severely punished.

According to Dr. Haddadin, a decision was reached during yesterday's ministerial cabinet meeting to allocate necessary sums due to contractors as

payment to projects implemented in 1996.

He further stated that the Jordan Water Authority (JWA) would resolve financial debts to the Jordan Electric Corporation's (JEC) branches in Irbid and Amman.

However, the allocated JD12 million which the ministry plans to pay the contractors and the JEC will not cover all of the debts.

"The Jordan Water Authority has begun payments, but money is still due," contractor Zubair Hlayel told the Jordan Times.

He admitted hesitation to undertake any costly contracts with the water authority due

to current financial disorganisation within the ministry.

"I am confident that the situation will improve under the guidance of the new minister," he added.

In answer to questions concerning water provision from Israel in accordance with the peace accord, the minister asserted that the government would take necessary measures to secure the rights of Jordanians, especially in matters concerning bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

JMA alliance between Islamists and Nasserites appears to have been broken

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The traditional alliance between Islamists and Nasserites to the Jordanian Medical Association (JMA) elections has been broken as Islamists formed an electoral list, excluding the representation of their previous Nasserite ally.

In an unexpected move, Islamist President Bassam Dajani, replaced Nasserite member of the JMA board Ahmad Armouti, with Mazen Kurdi, an Islamist seen as close to the Islamic Action Front (IAF) on the electoral list.

Dr. Dajani told the Jordan Times that the shift was necessary as the Nasserites declared themselves dissatisfied with a one-member representation on the electoral list.

"We insisted that one Nasserite was enough," he said.

Dr. Armouti who ran on the Islamist list in the previous 1995 JMA elections, was also nominated to run on Dr. Dajani's list for the ten-seat council in elections scheduled to take place in April.

The list, entitled "Association Cooperation List" (ACL), headed by Dr. Dajani, was formed after weeks of continuous negotiations with the Nasserites failed.

The ACL now includes three independent and three Islamist doctors as follows: Islamist Nazih Ababneh, Islamists, seen as close in the IAF, Nabil Muhar and Mazen Kurdi, independent Khaled Mu'di, independent Mohammed Anaki and independent Bassam Kiswani.

The list kept four seats vacant out of the ten-member seat list.

The Islamists have virtually

controlled the association for the past six years, when former Islamist Dr. Ishaq Maraga was the first Islamist to win the presidency and served for two terms.

Dr. Armouti, who became member of the JMA board four times, told the Jordan Times that he will not run in this year's elections. He said that the Nasserites will nominate one candidate to run on one of the lists, "probably the Baathists," in an attempt to weigh the actual strength of their movement in the JMA.

To oppose Dr. Dajani's list, a grouping representing leftists, Arab nationalists, and independent doctors has been formed.

This grouping, which names itself "the Professional List" (PL) and is headed by Secretary General of the Arab Land Party Mohammed Oran will pose the real challenge for the Islamists.

According to Dr. Oran, who is running for the presidency of the association, the PL is more of a professional than a political list.

Dr. Oran stated that no one political movement overshadows the rest.

Doctors nominated to run on the Professional List are as follows: independents Saleem Smadi, Jamal Yaghmour, Mohammed Abaddi, Nasser Shomally and Hani Haddadin; and leftists Zuhair Abu Faris, Hassan Hadad and Omar Abu Laban.

Both Messrs Dajani and Oran will be competing with independent Mohammed Zoubi, independent Khalil Barakat and independent Anwar Haddadin for the presidential seat.

A fourth, independent seven-member list has also been announced.

The list, entitled the Professional Work List (PWL),

includes members from the different governorates who have been elected in their sub-governorates in the last election," Dr. Maaya, one of the candidates, told the Jordan Times. "They know the needs of their particular governorates and they will work on transforming the governorates health demands into action."

This list includes Nofan Maaya residing in Madaba, Ali Hnati and Fayaz Rifaa residing in Amman, Mohammed Zuboun residing in Mafrqa, Hisham Jughul residing in Zarqa, Hussein Abu Samean residing in Salt and Zakaria Omari residing in Irbid.

The list leaves the presidential seat vacant, allowing its voters to vote for whomever they wish.

After the general JMA elections, carried out in two different forums, one for president and the second for members of the council of the board, the association holds separate elections in the Kingdom's 12 governorates.

Dr. Maaya maintained that the PWL left three vacant seats open to allow its supporters to vote for other candidates running on behalf of political parties on other lists.

"Some of our supporters have political affiliations which they would like to exercise," he said.

A third list, with a Baathist majority, will be announced to the next couple of days. This list will include Yousef Muasher, Adam Abdullah and Ja'far Hneidi. Two other names will be included on the list.

However, sources close to this list and to the PWL informed the Jordan Times that supporters of the two lists might indeed vote for Dr. Oran.

"We need new blood and new faces and therefore we

will back Dr. Oran," said a source close to the PWL.

Dr. Oran said that this list will be formed, with two purposes: the first to bring together different national movements which have been fragmented in the past and the second for "change and reform."

The doctor was ostensibly referring to reports of financial corruption at the JMA as announced last year. The prosecutor-general and a committee formed by the JMA are currently investigating the issue. Their first findings, which were announced by Dr. Dajani in January, showed that although no doctors were involved in embezzlement, certain amounts were indeed embezzled.

Last August a government-appointed committee to investigate into the case blamed inefficient financial management, failure in abide by accounting rules, corruption, and abuse of funds for a large loss incurred by the JMA pension fund.

As for West Bank representation at the association, doctors in Jordan will be asked to vote for Hisham Ardah, who has already been elected in separate elections as a council member by physicians residing in the West Bank.

"Although we cannot force the decision on the doctors, we will instruct all voters to cast their ballot for Dr. Ardah," Dr. Dajani said.

Since 1968, only nine of the executive council's ten members have been elected by the general assembly in Amman.

The tenth member has, until now, been a representative of West Bank physicians and elected by the JMA branch in Jerusalem.

What's Going On

CONCERT

*Performance by German Joachim Quartet (presenting works by Brahms, Debussy and Schubert) at the New English School, Khelida at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

*Display of products by Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, Wadi Saqra (Tel 699141/2), until March 30.

*Philatelic exhibition entitled "History of the Hashemites Through the Postage Stamps,"

marking HRH Crown Prince El-Hassan's birthday, at the Royal Cultural Centre, until March 23.

*ISO-9000 Show at Philadelphia Hotel, until March 23.

*Paintings by Saadi Dawood at the Orient Gallery, Issam Ajlouni St., Shmeisani, until March 31.

EID AL ADHA IS A SPECIAL HOLIDAY, ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN -

IT IS A TIME WHEN NEW CLOTHES ARE WORN - GIFTS GIVEN - WHERE JOY AND HAPPINESS PREVAILS THROUGH THE LAND -

BUT NOT EVERYONE IS FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE PARENTS OR ONES WHO HAVE THE MEANS TO MAKE IT ALL COME TRUE -

TO MAKE THE COMING EID A SPECIAL DAY - ESPECIALLY FOR OUR NEEDY CHILDREN -

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS RANIA AL-ABDULAH

JORDAN RIVER FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IS ORGANIZING A FUND RAISING CAMPAIGN

From March 25 until April 3, 1997
Between 8:00am - 7:00pm

Cloths, toys, books, non-perishable foods, monetary contributions and anything that will put a smile on a child's face will be collected, or you can deposit your contribution to: A special Jordan River For Development Projects' bank account number 48/50493/20 At The Arab Jordan Investment Bank

Following, allocated funds will be distributed all over the kingdom between April 6 until April 15, 1997
An account of what is contributed will appear daily in local newspapers

Donations will be distributed between April 6th until April 15th, 1997

We hope you will join us in making this Eid one to remember for our needy children, even if it means a sacrifice.

Chinese Rest, Alhithab School, Firas Press, British Council, Rainbow Street, Jordan River Designs, 3 of Child

Donated gifts should be sent to the address above (See map)
For further information call 613081 or Fax 613083

Notes:
* Items should be clean and in a good condition
* When sending a parcel, kindly attach a brief description with a recommended age or size.

Albanian rebels soften stance

TIRANA (Agencies) — Rebel leaders in southern Albania have renewed calls for the resignation of President Sali Berisha but appear to have pulled back from a confrontation with the government.

Envoys from 14 rebel-held southern towns met in the southern town of Tepelene Friday and reiterated calls for Mr. Berisha to be replaced by a presidential council until early elections within three months.

The rebels, who seized most of the south last month in an uprising fuelled by anger over failed savings schemes, had called for Mr. Berisha to quit by Thursday. The ultimatum was originally reported to be backed by various threats including a march on Tirana and putting the president under house arrest.

On Friday the rebels said they still wanted Mr. Berisha out, blaming him for allowing the shady savings schemes to flourish and not warning people of the risks, but there were no new threats.

The rebels said they supported the multi-party interim government of Prime Minister Bashkim Fino, appointed to restore order in the country and take it to

new elections by June.

The government has indicated it opposes any forced resignation of Mr. Berisha, possibly fearing a power vacuum in a chronically unstable country, and has said the new elections will decide the issue democratically.

Mr. Berisha has promised to step down if his Democratic Party, which won a landslide victory in elections last May branded unfair by the opposition and international observers, loses in the polls.

The rebels called for a voice in national political discussions and demanded that the government "neutralise" institutions helping Mr. Berisha remain in power, such as the state-run media and the SHIK secret police.

Mr. Fino has drawn up a bill to reform the SHIK, but this could be blocked by Mr. Berisha's Democratic Party, which controls 122 of the 140 seats in parliament.

The rebels also demanded fresh moves under the Finance Ministry to look into the shady Pyramid investment schemes in which thousands of Albanians, particularly in the south, lost their savings. They called for an investigation into how the losses might be

repaid.

The unrest sparked by the collapse of the Pyramid schemes has left the army in chaos after much of its weaponry was looted by angry rebels and the country, Europe's poorest, badly in need of outside aid.

Italy said it was preparing to send emergency health supplies to Albania at the weekend at the request of Mr. Fino, the first large-scale aid sent into the Balkan country since order collapsed.

The Italian News Agency (ANSA) reported earlier that Italy was moving 800 troops, including members of crack paratroop regiments and armoured units, to the southeast port of Brindisi in case they were required for deployment in a European Union relief mission.

The Defence Ministry has denied persistent media reports of impending Italian military intervention in Albania but had no immediate comment on the un-sourced ANSA story.

"All I can confirm is that we are waiting for the European Union to meet and we hope it will take a decision soon," one official said.

EU foreign ministers meet Monday in Brussels to pro-

vide a blueprint for security measures to assist a humanitarian relief mission.

Rome is also being asked to help Albania's beleaguered police force and army which have proved powerless or unwilling to stop the looting of army depots and government warehouses.

Tirana has presented the Italians with a long list of equipment needed to assist in efforts to calm tensions and bring the situation back under control.

Armoured vehicles, bullet-proof vests and special equipment to bolster police units featured high on the list.

For help with its military, Tirana has turned to its southern neighbour Greece. Officials in Athens said Friday that Tirana had officially asked it to help restructure the Albanian army. Athens, the officials said would reply "positively" to the request.

The restoration of law and order is taking first place over the delivery of humanitarian aid however. The European Union, which is to come up with a package of help at a meeting Monday has said that Albania must provide security before it can implement a programme of assistance.

Angry Afghans mark new year in Kabul despite Taliban ban

KABUL (AFP) — Stone-throwing children mocking Taliban soldiers were among thousands of Afghans who angrily defied a ban on the public celebration of new year in Kabul by the strict Muslim militia, residents told AFP Saturday.

In what was said to be a minor incident but nevertheless a defiant gesture, the residents said Taliban soldiers made no attempt to disperse the crowd or make any arrests.

"Boys began throwing stones after some Taliban arrived and ordered the people to go home," a new year's day celebrant told AFP.

He said after failing to convince anyone to move, the soldiers just packed up and left. They reportedly later returned and just watched in silence.

Because Nawroz, or Afghan new year, fell on a Friday this year, the people of Kabul expected the Taliban to declare Thursday a public holiday — as Friday is the

Islamic holy day — but the religious militia instead banned all celebrations.

However, hundreds of Afghan families defied the Taliban edict Friday and gathered at a large cemetery in the foothills of north-western Khair Khana suburb to celebrate the traditionally festive day.

"We have our customs, culture and traditions and the Taliban shouldn't trample on them," said one Afghan who celebrated Nawroz.

Many of the families who gathered at the cemetery raised new green flags over the graves of relatives killed in the 18 years of civil war Afghanistan has suffered since the Soviet Union invaded in December 1979.

Many women were also reported to have discarded their full-body shrouds, which the ultra-conservative Taliban have ordered them to wear in compliance with their interpretation of shariat, or Islamic law.

The Taliban at first

seemed genuinely perplexed as to why the locals had gathered in such numbers. The crowd stretched to the top of the mountains behind which children were reported to have had snowball fights.

Later in the day some young Taliban without their weapons were seen wandering among the crowd apparently enjoying the occasion.

The celebration of Nawroz marks the end of the Afghan cold season and the beginning of spring, a custom the Taliban branded in official radio broadcasts as "un-Islamic."

Last Thursday the Iranian embassy here hung up a sign on its outer walls wishing Afghans a happy new year.

The Conservative Taliban, who captured Kabul on Sept. 27, 1996, have cracked down hard on any habit or custom which does not conform to their ultra-strict interpretation of Shariat.

Sri Lanka's ruling party wins local elections

COLOMBO (AFP) — A curfew was Saturday extended over Sri Lanka as the ruling party swept local elections but failed to break through the psychological barrier of 50 per cent of the total votes polled.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga's People's Alliance (PA) won control of an impressive 194 out of the 238 local councils, conceding 43 to the main opposition United National Party (UNP) and one to an independent group.

But the 3.41 million votes received by the ruling party amounted to just 48.97 per cent of the total ballots cast, falling short of the 55 per cent the party had set out to win, analysts said.

The right-wing UNP also did badly compared to their performance in the August 1994 parliamentary election when they won 44.04 per cent of the votes compared to 41.25 per cent in Friday's vote.

The UNP said violence against its supporters and rigging had helped Mrs. Kumaratunga's party to sweep into power in the local government councils that were earlier dominated by it.

Police said one man was stabbed to death during balloting Friday while a bomb explosion at a polling booth injured 14 people.

Friday's night curfew was lifted for five hours Saturday and was due to be reimposed again during the night.

"There was a systematic stuffing of ballot boxes," the UNP said in a statement. "Ballot boxes were also hijacked and destroyed. The government has just concluded an election so full of violence, terror and thuggery."

Elections Chief Dayananda Dissanayake confirmed that there were reports of vote rigging but said he ordered ballots at such polling booths to be excluded from the count.

Results showed that 77.25 per cent of the 9.73 million electorate turned out Friday, exceeding estimates of poor voter response after the deaths of seven people in the run up to the election.

Officials said that at one polling booth at Bodimangalamaya in Veyangoda, just outside the capital, counting officers found 38 ballots in excess of the 1,501 votes that should have been inside the ballot box.



Moroccan Minister of Agriculture, Hassan Abouyoub, opens the first World Water Council in the southern city of Marrakech. Experts describe water supplies as one of the main challenges of the 21st century (Reuter photo)

Third World needs \$1b a year for water — experts

MARRAKESH, Morocco (R) — Water experts said Friday developing countries needed investment of up to \$1 billion a year to irrigate land and grow food to meet rising demands.

Addressing a World Water Forum of Scientists and Experts from 50 countries, Jin Yongjian, U.N. under-secretary-general for development support, said: "Over the next 30 years more than 60 per cent of the world's population will face water and food related problems."

"Moreover, for the first time, population is growing faster than areas being brought under irrigation for agriculture mainly in developing countries."

With one billion people already lacking access to clean water and adequate food, the world population is expected to grow from 5.5 billion to 8.5 billion by the year 2025 and will generate need and increase water consumption.

However, according to a report presented by Yongjian's department the potential exists to develop agri-

culture and increase cereal output to meet the increasing demand.

"Irrigated surfaces in developing countries could increase by 110 million hectares (275 million acres) or 59 per cent of existing irrigated surface, of which 69 million hectares is in Asia," the report said.

This could increase cereal output by up to 400 million tonnes and feed between 1.5 and 2 billion people annually by the year 2015.

"To meet this target, up to \$1 billion investment annually is needed in developing countries' irrigated sector in the coming 18 years," the report added.

Earlier, some specialists warned that water resources could become a source of conflict.

"Scarce water resources can lead to further competition and risks of domestic and international conflicts," said Ismail Sirageldin, head of the Stockholm-based non-governmental organization Global Water Partnership.

The Middle East and Africa topped the list of "hot regions" which would be linked to water disputes in future, he said.

A senior U.N. official, Pierre Najlis, said: "For most of the world, the current pattern of water resource development and utilisation is not sustainable."

"Unless action is taken now, the situation will become increasingly serious in the future," he said. Morocco's Public Works Minister Abdelaziz Meziane told the forum meeting in the Moroccan city of Marrakech that increasing populations meant "many countries will face a serious problem of water resources in the 21st century."

In the next decade, water would represent "the same value" as crude oil and be a source of conflicts, he said. UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayoz, who will open the second day's session, said in a statement that water would be one of the great challenges of the next century.

Monks raid mosque in Rangoon

RANGOON (AFP) — A group of at least 50 Buddhist monks raided a mosque on the northeastern outskirts of Rangoon Saturday, witnesses reported.

The monks removed loose property from the mosque, including the Koran, the Muslim holy book, and set it on fire outside, the witnesses said.

Full security was deployed after the attack in the area around the mosque in Yankin township, around a second mosque in adjacent Tanwe township and near the Home Affairs Ministry, in the same general vicinity, the witnesses reported.

The second mosque was emptied and locked by

security forces and neighboring shops run by Indian Muslims were ordered closed.

A large contingent of riot police plus fire trucks were stationed in the area, and barricades were readied in case authorities decided to close any roads, the witnesses reported.

At least seven truckloads of soldiers were seen standing by near the Interior Ministry.

Analysts suggested the authorities wanted to avoid any risk of the general population joining up with the monks.

The attack appeared linked to Buddhist-Muslim unrest over the past week in

the northern city of Mandalay, said to have been triggered by the attempted rape earlier this month of a Buddhist girl by one or more Muslim men.

Mandalay was reported to be calm Saturday.

The Rangoon incident began after some 50-100 monks gathered Saturday at Kaha Aye Pagoda road, where a congress on monk welfare concluded Friday.

The monks took commuter buses to the mosque in adjacent Yankin township, some five kilometres north-east of the city center, and raided it.

They dispersed when security forces arrived at the scene.

Bildt slams Yugoslav parliament endorsement of Serb accord

SARAJEVO (R) — Carl Bildt, the international high representative in Bosnia, said Friday that the Yugoslav parliament had violated the Dayton Peace Accord by endorsing special ties with the Bosnian Serbs.

Mr. Bildt said Yugoslavia, which comprises Serbia and Montenegro, had been notified that an agreement on closer military and economic ties signed on Feb. 28

was not consistent with Bosnia's peace accord and its constitution.

"By totally disregarding this, the regime in Belgrade has demonstrated that it is not fully committed to the peace agreement for Bosnia, but is prepared to disregard it when this suits its interest," Mr. Bildt said in a statement.

The Bosnian Serb parliament also voted for the

agreement last weekend, ignoring international and Muslim-Croat criticism that they had no authority to sign defence pacts without prior approval from Bosnia's joint parliament.

Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavsic told the newspaper Glas Srpski Friday she would not promulgate into law the agreement on special parallel ties between Bosnian Serbs and Yugoslavia.

Smoking gives addicts a deadly high, experts say

LONDON (R) — Smoking, one of the world's major killers, draws in its victims by offering a subtle but compelling high, scientists say.

On Thursday, the U.S.-based cigarette manufacturer Liggett Group made the astonishing move of admitting that smoking damages health and is addictive. Tobacco companies have denied this for years.

But doctors and anti-smoking campaigners can cite volumes of evidence that details just how smoking not only damages the body, but tricks it into begging for more.

"The evidence that it is powerfully addictive is absolutely overwhelming," said Dr Martin Jarvis, an addiction expert for the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, a British charity.

Of more than 61,000 people surveyed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, 79.6 per cent of daily cigarette smokers said they could not cut down. Only 66 per cent of daily cocaine users said they could not.

"It's a kind of stimulant drug, a bit like amphetamine. One of the thoughts about why cigarettes are so addictive is the route of administration," Dr. Jarvis said.

"When you inhale it in smoke you are getting the drug hitting the brain within seven to 10 seconds, which is actually faster than if you injected it. It is also cleared from the body very rapidly so you have to keep getting yourself a hit to keep levels up."

Scientists are beginning to understand the effects of nicotine on the brain. It seems literally to excite brain cells.

One brain chemical that smoking affects is dopamine, an important neurotransmitter, or chemical that carries messages between brain cells.

"It has something to do with reward mechanisms in the brain," said Leslie Iversen, a pharmacologist at England's Oxford University.

"It seems to be a final common pathway that is activated by a whole series of drugs that people seem to like using and that includes nicotine, cocaine, alcohol, marijuana and heroin."

Researchers at Brookhaven National Laboratory in Upton, New York, found last year that smokers had less of an enzyme called monoamine oxidase (MAO), which breaks down dopamine, than do smokers or people who do not smoke. This would mean more dopamine was available to their brains. Drugs such as cocaine and heroin have a similar effect.

Other research has shown that nicotine locks on to areas in the brain that release acetylcholine, another neurotransmitter that sets off electrical impulses in nerve and muscle cells.

Yet others have found it causes nerve cells to send out a larger-than-normal amount of glutamate, an excitatory transmitter which, as the name implies, excites or stimulates cells.

Experts say about three million people die each year from smoking-related illness in developed countries, representing 20 per cent of all deaths.

Eight different types of cancer, from lung cancer to leukaemia, are linked with smoking and smoking is the single biggest risk factor for heart disease.

"Tobacco smoke contains a large number of chemicals that are known to cause cancer by damaging the DNA of cells," said Dr David Phillips, a research scientist specialising in molecular carcinogenesis at the Institute of Cancer Research in London.

These include polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), aromatic amines, nitrosamines and aldehydes.

Peru guerrillas show no signs of taking asylum bait

LIMA (R) — Peruvian rebels holding 72 hostages showed no sign Friday of taking up Caribbean asylum offers as frustrated mediators denounced the lack of talks to end the 95-day-old Lima crisis peacefully.

The Dominican Republic became the second country after Cuba to offer the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) guerrillas a safe haven if they free the dignitaries they are holding at the Japanese ambassador's residence.

President Leonel Fernandez accepted Friday a request from visiting Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura to take in some of the roughly 20 rebels occupying the Japanese ambassador's home in Peru since Dec. 17.

But there was no word from rebels inside the besieged diplomatic com-

pound following a two-and-a-half hour meeting with mediators in a Red Cross safe house across from the mansion.

And an MRTA leader in Peru's central jungle told Reuters that asylum was not up for discussion because the government had yet to consider the group's main demand of freedom for some 450 jailed comrades.

"We cannot speak about asylum when the central demand has not been taken up," said a rebel leader with the nom de guerre "Comrade Alejandro," a member of the MRTA's highest policy-making body.

In Lima, meanwhile, the members of a three-man guarantors' commission overseeing negotiations expressed frustration at the lack of progress in bringing the crisis to an end.

"As guarantors we have

our limits. Our limit as guarantors is possibly reaching a final point," Archbishop Juan Luis Cipriani, the Vatican's representative on the panel, told reporters in his strongest public comments yet on the siege.

Despite such frustration at the apparent lack of progress, the New York Times reported that mediators have outlined a tentative agreement to end the crisis, whereby rebels would release the hostages and take asylum in Cuba in exchange for early parole for some comrades jailed on lesser charges.

The newspaper was quoting an unnamed diplomat close to the negotiations.

Fuelling the speculation, Arch. Cipriani confirmed Friday the creation of a guarantors' "sub-committee" to visit jailed MRTA rebels and check on their health and conditions.

Zimbabwe women tell Mrs. Clinton of abuses

HARARE, Zimbabwe (R) — U.S. first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton Friday played the role of global feminist, hearing Zimbabwean women tell stories of abuse by men for such things as having bad manners or wearing pants.

Mrs. Clinton was in a familiar role — listening sympathetically to female concerns — shortly after her arrival in Zimbabwe on a three-day visit. Zimbabwe in Central Africa was the third country

women in Zimbabwean society are not treated as equal partners with their male counterparts.

They had a supporter in Mrs. Clinton, who has conducted similar sessions on travels around the world.

"A democracy depends on the full integration of women into society, especially on seeing to it that they have equal access to the same tools of opportunity as men: Education, health care, and the chance to participate fully in the economy," she said.

Mrs. Clinton and her 17-year-old daughter Chelsea were visiting on their two-week goodwill mission to six African nations.

At the National Gallery of Art, with brightly coloured paintings on the wall behind her, Mrs. Clinton was guest of honour at a roundtable discussion featuring prominent women from Zimbabwean government, the legal profession, publishing, business and health care.

The message from all was the same — by and large



Some 30 Zairean government soldiers walk through Kisangani on their way to turn in their weapons to Zairean rebels who took over the town one week ago. Hundreds of government soldiers who have surrendered to the rebels are being detained in a military camp outside Kisangani where they will be educated about the objectives of the revolution (Reuters photo)

Russian premier defends reshuffle

MOSCOW (R) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin Friday defended cabinet changes to a hostile parliament while his new first deputy Anatoly Chubais promised angry miners huge sums in back wages would be paid.

"The changes in the government have been prompted by the needs of the current stage of economic reforms," Mr. Chernomyrdin told the Communist-dominated state Duma lower house, explaining last Monday's cabinet changes.

The reshuffle was ordered by President Boris Yeltsin, who blasted the cabinet for failing to end delays in wages and pensions which have led to worsening social tensions.

"One of the main tasks now is to restore order in the financial sphere and in the budget, which means restoring order in paying wages, pensions and normalising the system of payments," Mr. Chernomyrdin told the Duma.

The Duma was angered by Mr. Yeltsin's decision to give top cabinet posts to reformers, including to his Chief of Staff Anatoly Chubais, a hated figure among Russian Conservatives.

Conservative deputies were alarmed by promises that the new cabinet would

give a new push to radical market reform.

The Duma demanded explanations from Mr. Chernomyrdin on the changes, but stopped short of seeking the government's resignation or urging the Kremlin to cancel the reshuffle.

However, parliamentary anger is a far lesser threat to the government than the growing discontent of millions of Russians who have not been paid their meagre wages and pensions for months.

Trades unions are planning a nationwide protest on March 27 to demand urgent steps from the government. Mr. Chernomyrdin has sent new cabinet members to regions where the situation is most tense.

Mr. Chubais was the first to leave, heading for Kemerovo to take part in a coal miners' union conference. Miners were among Mr. Yeltsin's most loyal backers in the early 1990s but are now disenchanted with reform.

Bearing a message of goodwill from Mr. Yeltsin and about \$30 million in back wages for the Kuzbass region, Mr. Chubais, who is also finance minister, vowed to pay all wage arrears by the end of the year and clear the pensions backlog by June.

Playing down the importance of planned strikes on March 27, the 41-year-old economist told the miners the new government had solutions but needed more time.

"We (the government) will take responsibility on ourselves," he said. "And if the Russian people put their trust in us for a little while, then today's very severe problems will be solved."

"Now, as never before, we have a chance to turn the situation around in favour of the Russian people," he was quoted by ITAR-TASS news agency as saying.

Russian workers are owed about 50 trillion roubles (\$8.8 billion) in back wages, according to official figures, of which 10 trillion is owed by the state, which is struggling with low tax collection.

In Moscow, Labour Minister Gennady Melnikyan met employers' leader Vladimir Kolmogorov and labour leader Mikhail Shumakov to discuss smoothing the transfer of money out to the provinces to pay off arrears and ease tensions before March 27, TASS said.

"We realise there is real hardship in the country but we understand also the enormous danger of rocking the boat any further, since events could get out of control," Mr. Melnikyan said.

Witness says he saw thousands killed in Rwanda

ARUSHA, Tanzania (R) — A prosecution witness said Friday a Hutu militia leader on trial for genocide ordered militiamen in 1994 to surround thousands of people who were then massacred.

The witness, known as witness A, to protect his identity, told a U.N. tribunal Georges Rutaganda told Interahamwe Hutu militiamen to surround a crowd of Tutsi men, women and children one day in April 1994.

"Rutaganda told his Interahamwe to surround the crowd. They had machetes, clubs and guns," said the witness, adding Hutus were asked to show their identity cards and were then allowed to leave the area.

He said the militiamen were joined near the crowd of Tutsis by Rwandan Hutu troops, who brought a sack of hand grenades. "One soldier launched the hand grenades by throwing them towards the crowd and immediately after that the soldiers and Interahamwe opened fire on the crowd, killing most people," he said.

He said thousands died including his wife and four of his children on the route to the town of Nyanza near the Rwandan capital Kigali. He showed the court a bullet wound in his arm.

He said the soldiers left in the evening, promising to come back the next day and finish their killing. He said Tutsi women including the wounded were raped by soldiers and then killed.

"Soldiers undressed the dead women, saying that the nakedness of a Tutsi woman must be exposed," the witness said.

He said the Tutsis had first taken refuge at a technical school and then decided to head for U.N. headquarters in Kigali but soldiers intercepted them and ordered them towards Nyanza.

The prosecution plans to call a total of 35 witnesses in its case against Mr. Rutaganda, who is being tried at the U.N. tribunal in the northern Tanzanian town Arusha. The trial was adjourned until Monday.

The defence team has said that it will try to establish whether in fact a genocide took place or whether the Hutu majority was only trying to defend itself against Tutsi rebels.

Mr. Rutaganda, 39, was a vice-president of the Hutu Interahamwe Militia, which was held responsible for massacres during the genocide of about 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan dismissed two top tribunal officials last month after a U.N. report detailed mismanagement and legal chaos at Arusha.

Mobutu back in Zaire; U.S. troops head out

KINSHASA (R) — Ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko, his popularity plummeting, was back in Zaire Saturday to try to salvage what remains of his crumbling authority in the face of relentless rebel advances.

The United States said Friday it was sending hundreds of troops to west Africa to prepare for a possible evacuation of Americans from Zaire.

The U.S. forces would join French troops and planes already in nearby Gabon and Congo in case evacuations from Zaire became necessary.

The Department of Defence has directed the U.S. European Command to deploy enabling forces, consisting of several hundred personnel, as part of contingency planning for a possible future evacuation from Zaire, the Pentagon said in a statement.

Mr. Mobutu's low-key homecoming Friday, a far cry from the enthusiastic welcome he received on Dec. 17, contrasted sharply with rebel leader Laurent Kabila's triumphant entry into Zaire's third city of Kisangani earlier in the day.

Exhausted by fresh cancer treatment and a difficult flight home from France, Mr. Mobutu sent away a high-ranking welcoming committee and the world's press — apparently not to be seen being helped down the aircraft steps.

"It was a difficult flight," one close aide told Reuters, adding that Mr. Mobutu was resting at his official residence.

France and the United States were both monitoring events for signs of any need to airlift out their nationals.

Mr. Mobutu, 66, has spent most of his time in Europe since having prostate cancer surgery in August. He has dominated Zaire with a mixture of political acumen and military ruthlessness since seizing power in 1965.

He left hospital in Monaco Wednesday after fresh cancer treatment. He issued a statement Thursday calling for a truce and for a national council to find ways out of the crisis "with all our brothers, without exclusion."

France, his last international backer, hailed his call.

"For us his intentions seem unambiguous and are consistent with the essential aims of the peace process," Foreign Ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt told reporters in Paris.

But Mr. Kabila, whose rebels have been fighting to topple Mr. Mobutu since October, was unimpressed. He rejected Mr. Mobutu's truce-then-talks call, saying: "We negotiate first."

More than 10,000 jubilant residents turned out in

Kisangani, which fell to the rebels last weekend, to welcome Mr. Kabila as a saviour.

On Dec. 17, tens of thousands of people turned out in Kinshasa to welcome Mr. Mobutu back from Europe. On Friday small groups gathered in opposition areas along the route to the airport to jeer him and praise Mr. Kabila.

The president's son Mobutu Ntanga said in France his father planned to address the nation. "My father remains an important player in the stability of central Africa," he added.

He said his father no longer ruled out talks with rebel leaders but wanted to involve the government, army and transitional parliament. "His intention is to find a solution to the present crisis in consultation with parliament, the government and the military high command."

But many ordinary Zaireans, eager for a change from poverty and hardship under Mr. Mobutu, are openly rallying to Mr. Kabila.

His Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) has been advancing relentlessly across the sprawling and chaotic nation, where central government control has long been nominal in many places.

Although under foreign pressure to agree a truce and talk, Mr. Kabila says only face-to-face talks with Mobutu can halt the fighting.

An immediate concern for Mr. Mobutu involves the precarious situation of Lubumbashi, Zaire's second city and a vital economic hub on the border with Zambia, where locals were nervously awaiting an attack by rebel forces.

"The arrival of Kabila is imminent," said a local Zairean lawyer. "The top authorities, with the exception of the local commander, the governor and the mayor, have left the town with their families, some of them just this morning by plane to Kinshasa."

Two soldiers told an AFP reporter in Lubumbashi that they would not fight it and when the rebel forces advance on the town. "If Kabila arrives, we will put down our weapons and raise our arms. We have nothing to gain in this war."

Such a response on the part of government forces has become standard in Zaire's five-month civil war which has seen the Tutsi-led rebels seize one fifth of Zairean territory, sending soldiers and refugees fleeing west.

Kinshasa has tried to mobilise thousands of young recruits to check the rebel advance, and Saturday morning, some 1,000 Zaireans left Kinshasa for military training in southern Zaire.

Clinton has cause for satisfaction after summit

HELSINKI (AFP) — U.S.

President Bill Clinton had cause for satisfaction as he arrived back in Washington Saturday from Helsinki after his Russian counterpart Boris Yeltsin all but conceded at their two-day summit that NATO enlargement was inevitable.

For although Mr. Clinton could not dispel Russian hostility towards NATO's planned expansion into Moscow's former sphere of influence, he managed to persuade Mr. Yeltsin into a key concession which appeared to nudge forward U.S. plans for a new European security architecture.

The U.S. president, who admitted after the two-day summit that he had not expected to soften the Kremlin's position, himself gave no ground and impressed on Mr. Yeltsin that Washington's "basic positions constitute lines which he would not cross," said one senior U.S. official under cover of

anonymity.

The White House satisfaction stems from the fact that for all the headline opposition to NATO expansion in Moscow and despite Mr. Clinton's own intransigent stance at the summit, he managed to draw an apparent concession from Mr. Yeltsin that Moscow would agree to start talks on a new NATO-Russia partnership.

The partnership is to be sealed in some form of agreement between the two sides, but whereas before Moscow has insisted on a binding treaty to assuage its own security concerns, Mr. Yeltsin agreed at the summit that the agreement could come in the form of a mere political accord.

And Mr. Clinton stuck to his guns by stressing that no country would be excluded from NATO's push eastwards, an insistence which drew a sharp response Saturday from Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov who warned the

Western alliance to keep away from the Baltic states.

It remains to be seen how the U.S. Congress, controlled by the Republican opposition, will respond to the Helsinki disarmament accords sealed by the two presidents, particularly a double delay granted to Russia to pull back strategic nuclear warheads and dismantle missile launchers.

Conservative Republicans have repeatedly accused Mr. Clinton of weakness in his dealings with Russia on nuclear weapons, charging that the U.S. president has sacrificed the right to construe defence systems against so-called "theatre" or intermediate-range missiles.

Moreover, the agreement struck by the two presidents to reduce further their nuclear arsenals to between 2,000 and 2,500 warheads in the next 10 years, would appear to depend largely on Mr. Yeltsin's power to persuade a truculent parliament to ratify the existing arms

reduction treaty, START II.

The Russian State Duma, or lower house of parliament, has said it will not ratify START II unless NATO pledges not to expand into Eastern Europe.

But Republicans will likely have trouble criticising Mr. Clinton, particularly as he appears to have imposed his own views on NATO expansion on Russia and paved the way for an alliance summit in Madrid in July at which the first new members of the Atlantic alliance are due to be announced.

He also confirmed once again in Helsinki that while NATO currently comprises 16 equal member states, it is the United States which calls the shots.

And for Mr. Clinton himself, hobbled by a knee injury and beset by a series of scandals including a probe into alleged irregularities in the financing of his reelection campaign, the summit at the very least has amounted to a welcome diversion.

New EU treaty takes shape, may be agreed in June

BRUSSELS (R) — A new European Union (EU) treaty is beginning to take shape, which many believe can be agreed in June if the opposition Labour Party wins the British election.

Diplomats say that contrary to earlier expectations, it might now be possible for the 15 member states to sign a pact at the Amsterdam EU summit on June 16 and 17.

"The outline of a final deal is now visible," said one EU diplomat.

Disagreements over a broad swathe of issues had previously led most in the EU to say privately that negotiations would drag on past the summit.

But a combination of lower expectations, creative negotiating and the prospect

of a new, more EU-friendly British government has changed things.

Britain's Conservative government, which staunchly defends national sovereignty, has been viewed as a major hurdle to reaching a decision. But the Labour Party, seen as much more flexible, is expected to win a May 1 election.

The Dutch EU presidency Friday unveiled an updated version of the draft treaty to be presented to EU foreign ministers Tuesday when they meet in Italy's capital to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the treaty of Rome.

That treaty created the six-country common market that has now become the 15 nation EU.

Although a number of controversial issues are contained in the draft treaty, most EU officials believe it has the contours of what will eventually be agreed.

These include:

— Creating an area of security and free circulation five years after agreement on a new treaty. Britain and Ireland would be given some form of opt-out from a plan to lift all border checks.

— Giving slightly more responsibility to the European Parliament, limiting the number of members of the European Commission, moving modestly towards more majority voting and giving larger countries more say in decision making.

— Adopting treaty lan-

guage on employment and the environment.

— Strengthening cooperation in foreign policy matters by creating a planning unit and having EU leaders define the bloc's policies in certain, specified areas.

One key area of disagreement, however, is expected to be aimed at the treaty of Rome celebrations when France and Germany push for the incorporation of the Western European Union (WEU) defence grouping into the EU proper.

Although the two powers are supported by Spain, Luxembourg, Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands, the plan faces intense opposition from Britain and the bloc's neutral countries — Sweden, Ireland, Finland and Austria.

Dalai Lama brings message of peace on Taiwan visit

KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan (AFP) — The Dalai Lama brought a message of peace to Taiwan Saturday as he began a historic visit to the island which has united China's arch foes for the first time on the same soil.

Sending greetings to the people of Taiwan, the Tibetan spiritual leader stressed that his visit was not aimed at offending anyone.

"Of course I always keep in mind that any activities of mine should not create any embarrassment to anybody," he told a press conference at KAOHSIUNG AIR-

port at the start of the six-day visit.

In a bid to keep the visit low-key, no Taiwan government officials were at the airport to meet the Buddhist leader who was greeted by Master Chin Hsin, the head of the association which invited him.

But China Saturday stepped up its war of words with a spirited attack from the China Tibetology Research Centre.

"The Taiwan authorities are colluding with the Dalai Lama clique and are going further down the path of

splitting the motherland," the Xinhua News Agency quoted Huang Hao, from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, as saying.

Taiwan officials and the Dalai Lama have stressed the religious nature of the visit to downplay any political significance.

But Doje Cedain, director of the research centre, said the trip would work against the reunification efforts of Beijing, which have already ensured the return of Hong Kong and Macau.

"China's reunification is making significant progress,

but the Taiwan authorities are also accelerating their pace to create 'one China and one Taiwan'," Mr. Doje said.

Beijing views the island as a renegade province and has imposed Chinese rule on Tibet since 1951.

About 1,000 people turned out at the airport either to welcome the Dalai Lama or protest his visit.

The radical Taiwan Independence Party strung up Tibetan flags to mark the visit by the Nobel Peace Prize winner and waved banners calling for independence for both Taiwan and Tibet.

Britain fails to reach Hong Kong agreement with China

LONDON (R) — Britain and China said Friday they had failed to reach agreement on key areas in talks to hammer out details of Hong Kong's handover on June 30.

Hugh Davies, a senior British representative at the talks, said he was disappointed and frustrated that, after five years of talks with China, all details had not yet been worked out.

"Although we have reached some agreements this week, there are still a number of important matters where consensus is elusive," said Mr. Davies after the Anglo-Chinese Joint Liaison Group (JLIG), the diplomatic body handling Hong Kong's return to China, wound up three days of talks in London.

The Chinese delegation, meanwhile, blamed Britain for the lack of progress.

"The Chinese side has

made the greatest possible effort to accommodate the concerns of the British side, but the British side is still adopting disappointing delaying tactics and trying to establish linkage between unrelated issues," said China's ambassador to London, Zhao Jihua, who heads the Chinese delegation.

He called for more talks. Two key areas of dispute remain the "right of abode" concerning citizenship rights and the posting of Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops in Hong Kong before the handover date.

"Perhaps most disappointingly, we have failed to resolve our differences on right of abode," Mr. Davies said. "This is frustrating, because after almost five years of discussions, we are now in a large measure of agreement on almost all the substantive issues involved

in this complex subject. But we need to close the remaining gaps."

Mr. Zhao said the right of abode was for China to decide. "It falls within the internal affairs of China," he said.

On an advance guard of Chinese troops, Mr. Davies said the two sides had narrowed their differences but had been unable to reach agreement.

"Britain has long taken the position that some advance parties are a good idea," he said. The problems lie in the size of those parties and the timing of their arrival.

Mr. Davies stressed that some points of contention had been cleared up at the talks including agreements on legislation for mutual legal assistance and the transfer of sentenced persons.

Muslims kill 7 Hindus in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India (AFP) — Muslim separatists Saturday shot dead seven Hindu villagers in one of the worst massacres in the strife-hit Indian state of Kashmir, police and witnesses said.

Ten gunmen armed with AK-47 rifles stormed Sangram Pura village, 30 kilometres north of here, after midnight Friday and ordered eight young men out of their homes, police said.

The screaming victims were marched to a field, ordered to line up and shot. Seven men died instantly, but a student, Ashok Pandit,

survived the meticulously-planned attack.

The dead Hindus included two brothers and a father and son.

"They were killed in cold blood," a police officer told AFP in this summer capital of Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, where a Muslim separatist campaign has claimed around 20,000 lives since 1989.

The massacre occurred shortly after Indian troops shot dead five members of a pro-Pakistan guerrilla group in south Kashmir, officials said. All five belonged to

the powerful Hizb Ul Mujahideen group.

The dead included a commander of the group, which has suffered heavily in recent weeks at the hands of security forces battling Muslim separatists.

"We recovered a lot of arms and ammunition at the site," an officer said.

But the killings of Hizb militants was overshadowed by the massacre of the Hindus, India's otherwise majority community which is vastly outnumbered by Muslims in the Himalayan state.

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Netanyahu's wrong reaction

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was quick on the draw again when he charged Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat with responsibility for the bomb attack in a Tel Aviv cafe Friday that claimed the lives of four including the suicide bomber and left about forty injured. The Israeli accusation against the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) came despite the prompt Palestinian condemnation of the terrorist attack and in the absence of any definite information linking it with the incident. The PNA's quick reaction to the attack was given clear expression when President Arafat called Israeli President Ezer Weizman to express his shock and offer condolences as soon as he received word about the bombing and after failing to reach Mr. Netanyahu. It would appear that Mr. Netanyahu did not want to give Mr. Arafat any credit for standing against the blast. In fact, instead, Mr. Netanyahu accused Mr. Arafat of having a "great responsibility" for the bombing because, he said, the Palestinian leader has allegedly given a "green light" to militants to strike at civilian targets in Israel.

Mr. Netanyahu has already developed a strategy in dealing with the PNA by levelling all sorts of charges against it thereby diverting attention from accumulating Palestinian grievances against the Israeli government. We, therefore, find this Israeli tactic of passing judgement on the PNA well before there is clear evidence incriminating it as counterproductive. It is precisely so not only because the PNA has flatly and categorically rejected the accusation, but because it would be absurd for the PNA to deliberately give Israel ammunition to use against itself at a time when international opinion is being effectively mobilised against the policies of Prime Minister Netanyahu on the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks in general and on Jerusalem in particular.

If anything, it is Mr. Netanyahu who has relentlessly "pushed the peace process to edge of abyss" and steadily created a climate of hostility between his country and the Arab side as a whole. As the Jordanian official spokesman commented in the aftermath of the recent terrorist attack in Tel Aviv and yesterday's clash between Israeli troops and Palestinians in Hebron, all "acts of violence and terrorism do not serve the cause of peace and undermine all efforts to resume the peace process." Opponents of the peace process on both sides of the fence should not be fuelled by an environment that can ignite acts of terrorism and violence. Only by moving forward in the peace negotiations, without any impediments from either side, especially in the form of unilateral acts that purport to preempt the results of the final status talks, would there be an opportunity to end the cycle of violence and drive the peace talks closer to their final destination.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE BLAST in Tel Aviv served as a warning to Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu that unless he wakes up to the fact that he cannot go ahead with building settlements, the Israelis cannot enjoy security and peace, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Saturday. When Mr. Netanyahu sent his bulldozers to Jabal Abu Ghneim, he no doubt realised that he was digging a deep grave for the peace process and opening the door wide for the advent of acts of violence, said the daily. While we condemn all forms of violence, we realise that condemnation cannot put matters right unless the Israelis refrain from doing wrong, added the paper. The reaction to Mr. Netanyahu's arrogance, his determination to humiliate the Palestinians, his demolishing of Arab homes and his disregard for the feelings of Arabs and Muslims had as a result the blast that killed and injured scores of people in Tel Aviv, the paper continued. The desperate Palestinians are resorting to violence because Israel has intentionally chosen to ignore the accords it had signed and to pursue practices that provoke the Arabs to resorting to violence to secure their rights, added the paper. It said: We condemn the blast and also the Israeli practices which invited it, and hope that the Israeli leaders will take a lesson and put an end to violence by ending their occupation and aggression.

A WRITER for Al Aswaq described Benjamin Netanyahu as nothing but a member of the Zionist terrorist organisations and a copy of thousands of other extremists and criminals. Rashid Hassan said that Mr. Netanyahu is more dangerous to humanity than Baruch Goldstein, who sprayed bullets on the Ibrahimi Mosque worshippers, or Friedman who opened fire on shoppers in Hebron. Mr. Netanyahu is aiming, through his practices, to annihilate a whole nation, to expropriate Arab lands and to evict them from their homes, charged the writer. He said the world media in general and the Arab media in particular ought to pursue the task of exposing this terrorist, liar and anti-peace arrogant Israeli prime minister and his drive to Judaize the Arab city of Jerusalem and to perpetuate Israeli occupation of Arab lands. The writer said the media has a national duty to help create a strong and united public opinion oriented against Israel's inhuman and aggressive policies and against Mr. Netanyahu's evil actions and his disregard of the peace accords and international law.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Privatisation — if or when?

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

IT IS no more justified to ask the question of whether or not a specific public sector corporation should be privatised. The right question is when and how such a corporation should be subjected to the inevitable. Continued government retention of ownership and management of enterprises producing goods and services for sale in the market is no more a viable option.

It is no longer productive to argue on whether the profitable or the losing units should be privatised first and turned over to the ownership and management of the private sector. Both kinds of units should sooner or later, undergo the process. The profitable unit should be privatised to become more profitable and to enhance its contribution to the well-being of the national economy. The losing unit, on the other hand, should be privatised to transform it from a losing to a profitable concern.

In both cases, the private sector is naturally interested in making money, while the government should care about improving the economic performance and liberalisation of the market. Enhancing efficiency should work for the benefit of all parties concerned, including the government, the new investors, the labour, the consumers and the public in general.

The past financial results are by no means an indicator for the future. Had that been the case, the privatisation of a losing project would have been impossible. No businessman in his right mind would invest his capital in a project that loses. The price that a serious investor is willing to pay depends basically on the expected future profits under the new management and new environment which may have no relation with the losses or meagre profits incurred in the past.

There are many available options on how privatisation of public corporations may be approached. What is suitable for a certain corporation may be had for another. Such options include: offering tranches of shares of the subject company for sale in the financial market, the sale of the whole company to one investor, dividing the company into parts and branches and selling each part or branch separately, the sale of a controlling percentage of the shares, which may be less than 50 per cent. Public auction is not a bad idea in certain cases.

What is extremely important in all cases is that privatisation should be conducted under full disclosure and complete transparency, otherwise it is corruption, real or perceived.

The future of privatisation in Jordan, as elsewhere, depends on the political will. The official policies indicate that the will is there. However, in practice, we find some unencouraging indicators. It is true that the government accepted the World Bank's advice to create a unit and appoint an official to head and lead the privatisation operation. The choice was an ex-minister with extensive experience in customs, government audit bureau, and the Ministry of Supply, which is not exactly compatible with privatisation. We did not hear much from this privatisation unit placed in the prime-ministry. We may have to wait for some time before noticing any movement in this sensitive area.

The second unencouraging sign was the absence of any amount in the central government budget for 1997 as capital revenue that may accrue to the treasury as a result of selling some public assets, an indication either that no sale is expected during the financial year 1997, which is very unlikely, or of the refusal of the government to admit that such sale may actually take place, which could cause an outcry in the Parliament as well as in the street. This is more likely to be the reason.

Netanyahu's intransigence rocking the peace process

By Michael Jansen

NICOSIA — The bomb that shattered the Acropole cafe in Tel Aviv on Friday also shattered the image of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as the politician who could give the Israelis security while redefining the Oslo accords. The Acropole bomb was the first major "terrorist" incident during Mr. Netanyahu's tenure, the first since another bomber struck just about a year ago a few hundred metres away in Dizengoff Square, the fashionable cafe and shopping centre of Tel Aviv. And as long as Mr. Netanyahu persists in perverting the peace process, other lone bombers can be expected to strike in the heart of Israel "proper."

Mr. Netanyahu was well aware of the risk he was taking when he deployed the bulldozers on Jabal Abu Ghneim (Har Homa) last week. He had been warned by both his security advisers and many Palestinians that commencing construction on the new settlement would lead to violence. And he even tried to preempt the predicted attack and lay the blame on Palestine President Yasser Arafat even before it happened by saying that Mr. Arafat had

given the bombers a "green light" to go ahead with "terrorism."

But somehow all warnings and predictions did not encompass the reality of what was almost certain to happen. Therefore, the Israeli security forces and police did not seem to foresee that the bomber would strike in Tel Aviv in a copycat operation of last year's Purim spring festival incident. The Israelis believed violence would come in the occupied territories, in the areas called "Israel improper" by the late Henry Selz, a long-standing American friend of the Palestinians.

This wrong call was both tragic and culpable; yet another example of misjudgement by the Netanyahu regime which has a long list of wrong calls to its discredit. Wrong calls waned since Netanyahu assumed office last June. And since he had demonstrated a worrying propensity to commit major mistakes during his years as leader of the Likud opposition and the election campaign which brought him to power, no one — Israeli or Arab — should be surprised at his dismal record.

He began his career as prime minister by fighting with David Levy, who

rejected the foreign ministry portfolio and blackmailed the prime minister to bring the hardline Ariel Sharon into the cabinet. This was a most inauspicious beginning for it showed that Mr. Netanyahu neither understood the realities of Israeli politics nor exercised control over his colleagues. Thus, from the very moment he took office he was shown not to be Israel's most powerful prime minister.

It soon became abundantly clear that he was hostage not just to the David Levy-Ariel Sharon combination but also to all the disparate groups making up his coalition. And it was this state of affairs that allegedly drove people in his cabinet, Justice Tzahi Hanegbi and Avigdor Liberman, head of his office, to recommend the appointment of an unsuitable candidate for attorney general so he could "plea bargain" criminal charges against Ariele Deri, the head of the Sephardi Shas Party which is an essential part of the coalition. Mr. Deri was then supposed to deliver the cabinet and Knesset votes needed to approve the Hebron Protocol.

Last week, as the bulldozers smashed the pines on Jabal Abu Ghneim, the

scandal over this deal rumbled on at police headquarters in Tel Aviv, with Mr. Hanegbi being questioned for 15 hours on Thursday and for some hours on Friday, with possible indictment for "breach of trust" hanging over his head. But Mr. Hanegbi, the son of settlement firebrand Gehula Cohen, has been a wild man since his student days when he led protests against Israel's withdrawal from Sinai.

As Mr. Netanyahu's poor judgement in appointing such a minister (first to the health ministry then to justice) was demonstrated to all, Mr. Hanegbi piped up and said that President Arafat could once again be driven into exile between Tunisia and Baghdad if the Palestinians resumed violence. His remarks made thoughtful Israelis and angry Arabs question why the prime minister had raised such a man to a level of responsibility. Even the excessively mild U.S. State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns had to react negatively, though in measured tones, to Mr. Hanegbi's provocation.

Mr. Netanyahu's decision to launch the contested building project on Jabal

Abu Ghneim was not only a wrong call but a desperate attempt to deflect attention from the attorney general's scandal, revive his popularity amongst his right-wing supporters and preserve his unstable coalition.

Right-wingers who made Har Homa a test of Mr. Netanyahu's commitment to his election platform threatened to bring down his coalition if work did not begin "immediately" on the project. So the most powerful prime minister in Israel's history capitulated and sent in the bulldozers jeopardising the peace process to preserve his own skin. But by going ahead he has almost certainly lost the support of the majority of Israelis, 90 per cent of whom believe Jerusalem should remain Israel's exclusive, united "eternal" capital but do not believe that the time is right to build a new settlement in East Jerusalem's environs. Indeed, by appealing to the public, the popular mood, he might just have forced his ministers to drop their demand for the deployment of the bulldozers and saved the situation as well as his thick skin.

So compromised is Mr. Netanyahu's that former Labour Foreign Minister Ehud Barak, the man most

likely to succeed Shimon Peres as head of the party, flatly rejected the recent notion that Labour should join Likud in a "national unity" government. In response to reports that Mr. Peres was considering such a possibility, Mr. Barak said this week: "We will not join this rotten government of disgrace and failure. It simply must be toppled. Labour would be making a cardinal error if it joins such a government now or in the future." Labour, he says, should not be tainted with the "stink" of the Netanyahu government. It is not certain, however, that Mr. Barak can carry the rest of the party with him on this issue.

But Arafat's boycott of talks with Mr. Netanyahu, the demonstrations against Har Homa in the West Bank and the bomb in Tel Aviv should make Labour pause, if its leaders, other than Barak, have any sense of self-preservation. They will see that they should not jump onto Mr. Netanyahu's sinking ship. Because he is a captain who was bound to end up on the rocks, the tragedy is that he would also be taking down with him Mr. Arafat's ship of state and the entire peace process.

LETTERS

A true King for all

To the Editor:

THE ARTICLE entitled "King's personal warmth makes him Israel's favourite Arab leader" is not correct. Actually the King is one of Israel's favourite leaders in the entire world, not just the Arab World.

King Hussein is the embodiment of royalty, wisdom, compassion and pragmatism. He is an example for leaders around the world and a beacon of hope to the citizens of the entire planet.

In Judaism, we have a blessing which we must recite whenever we come in the presence of a king (Jewish or non-Jewish). In our modern times, there is doubt among many orthodox Jews, whether most of the kings and presidents in the world today constitute the original Jewish intent of what a king is.

However, King Hussein is a true king. In his presence we recite the blessing in awe and happiness.

We thank him for his courage and direction and he makes us proud to be at peace with the Jordanian nation in good times and also in bad times.

Allahu Akbar. God is truly great!

Eng. Arnold Stamler,
Tel Aviv,
Israel.

Shameful destruction

To the Editor:

ANOTHER U.S. veto? How sad. If the U.S. were succeeding brilliantly in bringing about just peace, it might have the right to exclude others from trying. But the fact is that the Palestinians are suffering cultural genocide at the hands of the U.S. client, Israel, so that rationalisation is an obvious lie.

I think only paid up members in good standing should be allowed to vote in the Security Council.

If Homer were writing about this war, this is the point where he would say, as he said of the ruin of Troy: "The gods are veiling their faces." The most shameful thing in this case is that the city could have been saved.

Dr. A. Clare Brandabur,
Amman.

'We want peace too'

To the Editor:

WE WOULD like to express our deepest appreciation to His Majesty King Hussein for his visit to the grieving families of the seven schoolgirls killed last week.

King Hussein, again, revealed his highly human nature and showed real compassion despite political disagreements. Only very few and very special people, especially leaders, are able to

show such integrity.

We can understand some Jordanians who do not approve of this visit, because they knew the King's visit would not cancel the Har Homa housing project.

We would like to thank King Hussein for trying to save the peace process in such difficult times and in spite of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's acts. The Israeli public, at least half of it, reject this act (the Har Homa settlement) and is very frustrated with this policy; fact is we can do nothing to stop it.

We hope peace between all the peoples of this region will be reached for a better future. We must continue this process in spite of the difficulties which lie ahead of us because the peace is necessary for all of us.

Lilach Ron, Ofra Levi, Hagat Rubinek,
Israel.

Time to choose

To the Editor:

THE VOTE on Palestine by the Security Council is now over. The American veto was a foregone conclusion. It is now starkly clear that the United States is clearly, unequivocally and without limit on the side of Israeli imperial expansion into Palestine and its ultimate absorption into a "Greater Israel."

There is no longer any way to hide from this reality. In the eyes of Israel and the United States, there will be no Palestinian state; the Palestinians are expendable people and they are to be eliminated from their ancestral lands. Whether by a "final solution" or by expulsion, simply remains a detail to be worked out.

The route of quiet, steady negotiations has been clearly shown to be bankrupt. This route was used by Israel, with American backing, as simply a ruse to distract others from the rapidly escalating Israeli depredations and thefts of land. Keep them talking — while we keep on talking: that has been the Israeli strategy all along. It has worked.

That this strategy is to continue was clearly emphasised by the American veto at the Security Council. That the United States is clearly and unequivocally aligned with the Israeli strategy is now painfully evident. There is no longer any way to hide from this reality. The Americans have made their stand clear — and there is nothing more to talk about with them. Some in the Arab World may still harbour this illusion, but it is an illusion nevertheless, that further talking will avoid the inevitable destruction of Palestine. The Israelis and Americans have signalled, absolutely clearly, that destruction is desired.

This is truly the "moment of truth" for Palestinians — the whole Arab Nation, for that matter. Talking, resolutions, incessant meetings and protests are futile against this hostile coalition. These two Imperial powers do not listen, and what they choose to hear they discount or ignore. After all, Israeli depredations and land thefts have increased and accelerated, and what has been the reaction from the Arab lands? Words, meetings, talks, protests... Words, meaningless words.

Is it any wonder this Imperial duo simply shrugs and steps up the pace? And why not? Nothing happens, anyway. And the words? Neither Israel nor the United States listen to other

nations. No imperial power ever has. Especially from those people it intends to exploit. There it simply sends in its armies, gunboats, aircraft. Colonial people are to be cowed, not reasoned with.

The key question now is not: "What more compelling argument can we use the next time?" but rather: "What do we do next?" Not say, do.

This is the moment of decision. It is a clear moment of decision for Yasser Arafat, the Palestinians and the Arab Nation who claims it supports Palestine and the Palestinians. The American veto has given no other choice but to either acquiesce in the extinction of Palestine or finally take a clear stand for the independence of their people.

There are moments in history that are truly critical. This is clearly one of them, where a clear choice must be made. And just as clearly, Arafat must choose as well: to be the father of Palestine or its gravedigger.

Dr. Hendrik S. Weller,
Amman.

Hope for Middle East

To the Editor:

THE PEACE process in the Middle East goes through a paradoxical phenomenon. The moment is full with both hope and despair, with peace and violence, with a ray of light in a dark tunnel; the atmosphere is both comic and tragic.

However, there is hope for peace and that depends entirely on strong wills and correct visions. Peace could be achieved if Israel could integrate in the region; then the problems of settlements, building temples, peace with Syria and Lebanon would all be solved.

For Israel to integrate in the region, a confederation with Jordan and Palestine is necessary. One could tell that His Majesty King Hussein would be elected as the head of this confederation and Jerusalem would be its capital, with each country individually preserving its own capital.

Israel can cooperate with the countries in the region based on the Islamic model which, history proved, made sure that Jews were always respected and their rights protected. This situation would allow building settlements without resentment, the temple next to the Holy Aqsa shrine without its demolition, and would open the way for peace with Syria and Lebanon.

Perhaps the United Nations and the International Court of Justice could be moved to Jerusalem to restore its glory. But there should also be free determination to make all fanatic attitudes disappear if decisions concerning Israel and its interests are to be resolved by a confederation.

Such a confederation not only would enhance peace in the region, it would also enhance international economy and makes more secure the interests of international community. Moreover, the Middle East region will have a chance for survival and progress.

Ibrahim Anton Qafiti,
Amman.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Karamah anniversary celebrated

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputising for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein on Saturday attended the Jordanian Armed Forces' celebrations of the 29th anniversary of the Al Karamah Battle. Upon arrival at Karamah village, Prince Abdullah was received by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai and other senior officers.

King Hussein Bridge closed

AMMAN (Petra) — The Israeli authorities on Saturday closed down King Hussein Bridge for Palestinians heading for Gaza as of Saturday March 22 until further notice. The move followed Friday's explosion in Tel Aviv.

Blast kills SLA official

MARJAYOUN (AFP) — A security official with the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) was killed by a bomb at his home in Israel's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon on Saturday, security sources said. Camille Nemr, a local intelligence official for the Israeli proxy militia, was killed in a blast at the entrance to his house in the village of Aaychiye in the central part of the occupied border zone, the sources said. Israel occupies a narrow strip of southern Lebanon to ward off attacks by anti-Israeli guerrillas on northern Israel. One Israeli soldier was killed and three wounded in an ambush in southern Lebanon on Wednesday by Hizbollah fighters.

Sanaa denies Ben Laden report

SANAA (R) — A Yemeni official on Saturday denied an alleged Saudi Arabian dissident, named by Washington as a prime suspect in bombings against U.S. targets in Saudi Arabia which killed 26, had gained a foothold in the country. "There is no truth in reports carried by Reuters that (Mr. Osama) Ben Laden is present or has gained a foothold in Yemen," said the official. "Yemen will not allow its territories to become a launch pad for opposition activity against any brotherly or friendly country," the official, who declined to be named, told Reuters. Reuters quoted Arab diplomatic and Western intelligence sources in Sanaa on Friday as saying an advance party of Mr. Ben Laden's supporters had established cells in Yemen, which shares a disputed border with Saudi Arabia (see page 12).

Egyptian discovers ancient tomb

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian carpenter who uncovered an ancient Greco-Roman tomb under his workshop in southern Egypt was caught after trying to sell the contents, the government newspaper Al-Ahram said Saturday. The tomb, buried four metres underground, contained three terracotta coffins decorated with pharaonic inscriptions and drawings from the Greco-Roman era, around 300 BC. Antiquities police launched a raid on the workshop in Aswan, around 900 kilometres south of Cairo, and arrested the carpenter who confessed he failed to alert the authorities because he wanted to sell the artefacts. The Aswan region is rich in hidden antiquities and numerous boushoulders have discovered hidden burial sites under their homes.

New quake rocks northwestern Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — An earthquake measuring 4.9 degrees on the Richter Scale hit the Ardabil region in northwestern Iran on Saturday, three weeks after a strong tremor there which left around 1,000 people dead, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported. The quake struck at 3:32 a.m. (1102 GMT), it said. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage. The epicentre was at the town of Sarein, 30 kilometres west of Ardabil and 420 kilometres northwest of Tehran. The city of Ardabil itself felt the tremor, which came after several days of calm. Around 1,000 aftershocks hit the region after the Feb. 28 quake, which measured 5.5 degrees on the Richter scale. Around 2,600 people were injured and 60,000 left homeless from that quake.

Arafat, Netanyahu try to save peace process

(Continued from page 1)

ing the deadly attack in Tel Aviv.

"If he has done that I'll not keep silent," Mr. Arafat told AFP. "If he has done that he will be investigated."

"At the same time we condemn what happens against our people in Bethlehem, in Hebron," he said, adding that 189 people were injured during Friday's protests against the construction of the new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

An anonymous caller claimed responsibility in the name of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), the biggest Palestinian movement opposed to the peace process, saying it was in retaliation for the Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

Tensions were running high for a third day on the West Bank, as violent clashes between rock-throwing Palestinians and

Israeli soldiers firing rubber bullets and tear gas injured dozens on Saturday. (See separate story)

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has blamed Mr. Netanyahu's hardline settlement policies for rising tensions in the self-rule areas but called on Saturday for peace efforts to be redoubled to overcome the current crisis.

"We have to restart the peace negotiations to give peace a chance," the chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat told AFP.

He voiced support for Mr. Netanyahu's proposal to accelerate the pace of discussions on the final-status of Palestinian territories, as long as Israel respected current agreements, including the withdrawal from West Bank rural areas and to halt its settlement on occupied land.

But Mr. Arafat added: "According to the agreements, the settlements have to be discussed in the final negotiations, and also

Regent, Majali indicate government focus

(Continued from page 1)

Earlier Dr. Majali was quoted by the London-based Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC) as saying that the new government was giving due attention to the country's internal problems in economy, industry, public administration, agriculture and other domestic affairs.

"In the past Jordan was involved in conflicts and the foreign issues used to consume a great deal of time. But now that we are living in an era of peace we should be giving more attention to domestic issues," said the prime minister.

He said Jordan's relations with all Arab states were good, and Jordan in particular is standing by the Palestinian people "as their cause is our cause and we should back them all along, particularly in the crisis they are facing at the moment."

He said Jordan will be taking advantage of the peace treaty with Israel to

help the Palestinians regain their full rights.

Dr. Majali admitted that some differences existed with some Arab states, but he said that differences should not obstruct efforts for securing and protecting national interests.

"We have to admit that differences do exist but they are not of that depth and would not cause an estrangement with the other Arab states and contacts should continue despite differences in views," added Dr. Majali.

On King Hussein's visit to Washington he said: "As you know, the U.S. is the main sponsor of the peace process and we know of the U.S.-Israeli relations and therefore whenever we are faced with a problem this sponsor should intervene to put matters right. For this reason King Hussein is constantly in touch with the U.S. administration and while there now he is expected to seek help to guarantee the rights of the Palestinian people."

Palestinian leader, Musa assail veto

(Continued from page 1)

joined in worldwide criticism of Israel's action. But it also argued that differences between Israel and the Palestinians should be resolved between them and not brought to the United Nations or other international bodies.

Speaking before casting his latest veto, Mr. Richardson said: "No one should interpret the opposition of my government to this resolution as an expression of support for the construction now going on at Har Homa/Jabal Abu Ghneim. It is not."

But he said the United States "does not believe that the Security Council or the General Assembly should be in the business of inserting themselves into issues that the negotiating partners have decided will be addressed in their permanent status talks. Such interference can only harden the position of both sides."

Egyptian Ambassador Nabil Al Araby took strong issue with the U.S. position, insisting that the U.N. Security Council had the right to deal with any issue affecting international peace and security.

"The Middle East is no exception," Mr. Araby said. After the March 7 U.S. veto of a resolution sponsored by the council's four

European Union members — Britain, France, Portugal and Sweden — Arab states took the issue to the General Assembly, where there is no veto but whose decisions are not binding.

On March 13 the assembly adopted a resolution by a vote of 130 to 2 with two abstentions, calling on Israel not to go ahead with the project. The United States and Israel cast the only negative votes.

When Israeli surveyors and bulldozers began work on the site on Tuesday the Arab group brought the issue back to the Security Council with a new, briefer resolution.

Speaking after the veto, the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) U.N. observer, Nasser Al Kidwa, said it was difficult to accept that it had been cast to protect the peace process or that bilateral negotiations were the only solution "when one of the two parties is imposing new facts on the ground."

"The bitter reality is that this veto has been cast to shield Israel from the will of the international community and to exempt Israel from the provisions of international law and the charter of the United Nations," Mr. Kidwa added.

"International legitimacy is our sole weapon," said Mr. Kidwa.

Jerusalem. "According to the agreements, no geographical changes will be done, no demographic changes are to be done in the Palestinian territories, including east Jerusalem."

Mr. Netanyahu has offered to speed up negotiations with the Palestinians to reach a final peace settlement within six months, rather than the two-year timetable laid down in signed interim peace accords.

Meanwhile, Israel praised on Saturday the United States' second veto in as many weeks of a United Nations Security Council resolution condemning the new Jewish settlement, known as Har Homa, in Arab East Jerusalem, while the Palestinians denounced Washington's action.

"Israel thanks the United States and appreciates its decision, which reflects America's coherent position according to which differences have to be negotiated directly between the two parties and not in the international arena," said Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy.

In contrast, Palestinian cabinet secretary Ahmad Abdul Rahman said they "regretted the American veto, which will only encourage Israel to violate the peace accord."

In another development, military sources said that Israeli troops had sealed off the West Bank house overnight of the suspected Tel Aviv bomber, Musa Abdul Kader Abu Diya, 28. Thirteen Palestinians were arrested in Abu Diya's West Bank village, Surif, while four were arrested in the nearby village of Nuba, also located between the self-rule towns of Bethlehem and Hebron, the sources said.

Israeli soldiers boarded up Abu Diya's house overnight, which they routinely do to the homes of those suspected of perpetrating suicide bombings.

"There are two types, of obstacles, a bureaucratic one which related to the U.N., ... the other obstacle is political, that when contracts are presented to the U.N. Sanctions Committee they either approve, freeze or cancel them. Unfortunately the U.S. has crippled many of these contracts," Mr. Aziz said. "Until now only 10 per cent of these contracts have been approved," Mr. Aziz said.

Jordan's water cheque is bouncing

By Lotte Jorgensen
Special to the Jordan Times

TO THE outside observer, it seems difficult to believe that there is a water shortage/crisis in Jordan. After six weeks of endless rain-falls one may be mistaken and think that you refer to the current dangers of flash floods. But, in fact, the water crisis in Jordan, and for that matter in the whole region, is the problem of water shortage.

Jordan has one of the lowest per capita consumption of water in the world and a long history of lacking water. However, wheat is being grown in the desert where no crops would grow without serious interference from man, irrigating the dry lands with some of the finest drinking water in the world. Bananas are also grown in the Jordan Valley despite the fact that they demand a lot of water; and there seems to be no end to the water coming from the tap, at least in the residential areas of West Amman.

However, this apparently abundant flow of water in Jordan relies on one sole fact: that Jordan has for the past years been drawing heavily on its source water resources.

According to a survey done by the World Bank last year, Jordan withdraws 25-30 per cent more water from aquifers per year than is being replenished. In other words, Jordan is in this way fast destroying its own capital of water. It has now come to a point where 5-600 million cubic metres annually are being extracted from aquifers and the oasis of Azraq, overdrawn the national "water account" by 2-300 mcm a year.

This could lead, in the very near future, to a disaster far beyond previous experiences of water shortage during the summer

months, says long-experienced water expert, Elias Salameh of the Jordan University Department of Geology and Earth Sciences.

"Within the next five to six years, some of our ground water aquifers will be totally destroyed if the current overdraft continues," Dr. Salameh says.

No sense of alarm

The forecast and the figures are well-known to most Jordanians, and the water problem is among the most "popular" themes for debate. Yet, the demand for water continues to grow rapidly, and so far demands are being met — maybe at the cost of the water supply for future generations.

The government is doing a lot to solve the problem, but still there is no real sense of alarm in the public at large, says United Nations and U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) resident coordinator in Jordan, Jorgen Lissner, who has lived in Jordan since 1995. UNDP has, throughout the years, carried out projects in the water sector in Jordan, in close cooperation with the government.

There seems to be a need for public awareness regarding the problems, especially among those Jordanians who have the capacity and who can afford to take water conservation measures. Solving the water problem of Jordan is, however, a shared responsibility. According to Dr. Iyad Abumoghli, UNDP programme officer for the environment, the government needs to go ahead with measures that will encourage water conservation in all sectors and to enforce the laws and regulations.

At the same time, it needs to ensure that the measures taken do not hit hard on the poorest people of the coun-

try. The other pan lies with the public, who has a responsibility to use water with caution, Dr. Abumoghli says.

A lot can be done now

There is a wide range of measures to take in order to reduce the pressure on ground water without negatively affecting economic development.

Raising the price of water to create a financial incentive to save water is just one. Pricing will automatically affect the biggest consumers, thus avoiding that the most needy of the country will suffer. Besides, if people get what they pay for, they are more likely to accept the bill.

Another problem is loss due to leaking water pipes that is estimated in some areas to be as high as 50 per cent. If this loss could be reduced to 30 per cent, about 60 mcm of water would be saved annually.

Another issue is water harvesting. For example, the municipality of West Amman has the regulatory tool to demand water harvesting equipment installed on rooftops of every new house being built. Enforced, some of the approximately 8 billion cubic metres of water hitting Jordanian soil during the rainy season could be collected for use in the households. This way, much municipal water coming from Azraq or some of the overused aquifers would be saved.

In the agricultural sector, measures should also be taken to achieve a more efficient use of water, for example shifting the way farm land is being irrigated to closed irrigation systems instead of sprinklers. Furthermore, a change in crops would save water. It takes 3,500 cubic metres of water to irrigate one dunum of bananas, where-

as one dunum of tomatoes or vegetables only requires 7-800 cubic metres. Strawberries are also cheap in water and, at the same time, they sell well.

In recent years the price of water for agricultural use was raised. But it is yet to be seen what effect this has had on saving water. No doubt, however, there is a potential, the experts agree. After all, agriculture accounts for the consumption of 650-700 mcm a year, or well over 70 per cent of all water usage. An increase in efficiency by only 10 per cent means some 70 mcm saved per year. This could completely reduce the pressure on Azraq, which was, a couple of years ago, close to drying out until a conservation project conducted by the UNDP and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature came to its rescue.

Further measures, such as curbing the rapid population growth in the country, also need looking into as the growing gap between the number of people in need of safe water and the available resources is part of the problem as well.

Altogether, there are lots of possibilities to "harvest" water just by introducing small alterations in the consumption patterns of today. But on top of that, all water experts agree, there is also a need to search for new resources of water. Besides getting water from Israel and Turkey, the introduction of new technologies to desalinate brackish water offers solutions.

"The bottom line is that the government of Jordan has to know its priorities in the water sector. It has to be a collective effort using a multiple criteria assessment by including every single aspect if the problem is to be solved for the future," says Dr. Abumoghli.

French pioneer's account of Jordan century ago reviewed

By Anca de Maio
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The works and personality of the French Dominican Father Antonin Jaussen (1871-1962), a pioneer in modern Oriental studies who left an authentic testimony of the reality of Jordan a century ago, were the subject of review at a two-day conference held at the University of Jordan that started Saturday.

Organised by the French Centre of Studies and Research on Contemporary Middle East (CERMOC), the conference tackled Jaussen's contribution to the introduction of Western sciences to the Middle East and the way in which that high-

lighted Arab cultural and historical heritage. Member of the French Biblical and Archaeological School in Jerusalem, Antonin Jaussen "was a man of religion though not a missionary. He was a scholar though not an academic," explained Dr. Francoise Metral from the University of Lyon. His works remain modern and useful in terms of the information and documentation it provides to today's scholars, she said. "It is regrettable that manuals of Middle Eastern anthropology give so little attention to his writings," Dr. Metral said, naming Jaussen's valuable works on Nabulsi and on the tribes of Transjordan as well as a number of his arti-

cles on Palestine, the Negev, and northern Arabia.

"The CERMOC is currently supporting the publication in autumn of an Arabic translation of Jaussen's book on Transjordanian tribes 'Customs of the Arabs in the country of Moab' (1908)," the scientific secretary of CERMOC in Amman, Dr. Riccardo Bocca, said. "The document covers the area that roughly corresponds today to the Karak Governorate. It testifies to the tribal life and values of the great-grandparents and grandparents of today's Jordanians," he continued. "In the context of so many Nabatean, Roman and Byzantine archaeological vestiges on the Jordanian territory, the

access to a written testimony of the core of Arab heritage might be of much interest for today's Jordanians' understanding of a past that has not died yet," he added.

The present conference is part of a three-project programme of the CERMOC in Jordan. The next project will include the publication of the proceedings of two conferences on "rethinking politics and state" at a macro and micro level from 1946 until 1996. The third project will debate the social history of the city of Irbid before and after 1948, Dr. Bocca said.

Fierce clashes erupt in Hebron

(Continued from page 1)

cles with stones and were hauling more stones in plastic bags to the centre of the city where clashes continued.

Three of the wounded are in critical condition and are undergoing surgery," said Dr. Yousef Sharawi, the director of Hebron's Alia hospital.

One Palestinian policeman was spotted by his superiors joining stone throwers and was ordered to leave the scene. Both Israel's military commander in the area and the top security chief for the Palestinians arrived at the scene to calm the sides.

Israeli troops imposed a curfew on the downtown area of the city that remains under Israeli control.

Troops also enforced a closure of the West Bank

and Gaza Strip, barring the more than two million Palestinians there from entering Israel. The closure kept tens of thousands of Palestinians from their jobs in Israel.

Friday's blast at the Apropro cafe in downtown Tel Aviv came after several days of warnings by Israeli intelligence officials that militants were plotting attacks in Israel.

Palestinians have been furious with Israel for breaking ground earlier this week for a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem, the sector the Palestinians claim as a future capital.

Israeli and Palestinian security officials met several times after Friday's bombing to coordinate the crackdown on Hamas.

The clashes were as heavy as those on Friday,

when at least 13 Palestinian youths were injured by rubber bullets and dozens were treated for tear-gas inhalation in the most serious unrest since Israel handed most of Hebron to Palestinian rule in January.

The Israeli army declared a curfew on Friday on the Israeli-controlled section of Hebron where 450 Jewish settlers guarded by the army live among thousands of Palestinians.

An army spokesman said the curfew barred Palestinians, not Israelis, from moving around in the area.

Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon held a protest strike Saturday over Israel's construction of a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

Residents of Lebanon's 12 refugee camps, which account for nearly half of the 350,000 Palestinians

registered in the country, observed the strike called jointly by supporters and opponents of the peace process with Israel.

Youths burnt tyres at entrances to the Al Hilweh camp, which is Lebanon's largest and lies near the southern port city of Sidon. They raised Palestinian flags and pasted giant posters of Jerusalem on walls.

Jerusalem holds the key to peace and the door to war," read the banners in refugee camps near Tyre, further south, where officials said the strike was widely observed.

Schools and shops were closed in Al Jalil camp, near Baalbek in eastern Lebanon. The Beirut camps were also paralysed by the strike.

No strain in Jordanian-Iraqi ties

(Continued from page 1)

coming period will be a period of cooperation and full understanding."

Mr. Aziz reiterated his country's position to consider Aqaba port as a major point of passage for Iraq-bound goods in line with Baghdad's oil for food agreement with the U.N. signed late last year.

"Aqaba has been for the past quarter of a century one of the major ports through which we export and import our goods. This is going to be the case. We started using it when Iraq was not under sanctions because of the role Aqaba has played in the Iraqi economy started in 1974. That time there was no war and there were

no sanctions.... Aqaba has been and will be one of the major and important outlet," for Iraq, Aziz said.

Mr. Aziz accused the U.S. of delaying approval of contracts his country signed with foreign firms to supply Iraq with food, medicine and other humanitarian goods under the U.N. deal.

There are two types, of obstacles, a bureaucratic one which related to the U.N., ... the other obstacle is political, that when contracts are presented to the U.N. Sanctions Committee they either approve, freeze or cancel them. Unfortunately the U.S. has crippled many of these contracts," Mr. Aziz said. "Until now only 10 per cent of these contracts have been approved," Mr. Aziz said.

Pakistan from creation to transformation

By M. Anis

AUGUST 14 will be always remembered in the history of Pakistan as the day of its tryst with destiny. It was 49 years from now when Pakistan emerged on the world map as the fifth most populous country and the then biggest Muslim state.

The contemporary history is replete with innumerable instances where subjugated people around the globe resorted to violence and political terrorism in their quest for emancipation. Pakistan stands as an amazing exception. It does not owe its creation to any armed struggle. On the contrary, its emergence was the triumph of a democratic idea. The faith of the people in Pakistan had made the idea possible, and their free acceptance of the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah enabled them to achieve it. The Quaid-i-Azam had the resources of his own spirit and the trust of the people in his leadership, and with these intellectual and moral weapons he won Pakistan for his people.

The Quaid-i-Azam delineated the objectives of the creation of Pakistan in these words: "You are only voicing my sentiments and the sentiments of millions of Muslims when you say that Pakistan should be based on sure foundations of social justice which emphasise equality and brotherhood of man. Similarly, you are voicing my thoughts in asking and in aspiring for equal opportunities for all."

The unique significance of Pakistan's establishment is that its existence is not reckoned to be measured strictly in terms of Western economic, social and political norms, for the country draws its inception from an ideology which transcends such myopic confines, constitutes its genesis and is rooted through social justice, equality, equity and brotherhood.

Outlining policy guidelines for the newly-born state, the Quaid-i-Azam declared: "We achieved it so that physically as well as spiritually, we are free to conduct our affairs according to our traditions and genius. Brotherhood, Equality and Fraternity of man, these are all the basic points of our religion, culture and civilisation. And we fought for Pakistan because there was a danger of denial of these human rights in the sub-continent. We aspired for these great ideals because of the centuries-old dual domination by foreign rulers and by a caste-ridden social system."

Thus, in the context of the Indian policy, the demand for Pakistan was essentially entrenched in the "Two Nation Theory" which truthfully manifested sharp differences between followers of Islam and Hinduism. The fusion and integration of the two communities was, therefore, inconceivable. The only viable solution of the complex problems lay in establishing a state in areas where by virtue of their majority the Muslims were legitimately entitled to rule.



Muhammad Ali Jinnah

The Muslims of the sub-continent, scrambling for their survival, learnt on the strength of experience that while politically their very existence in Hindu majority-led independent India would be perilous; from cultural and social standpoint, it portended their gradual extinction. This was a real fear running through their ranks and files which fuelled and intensified the Pakistan Movement.

The All-India Muslim League, founded in 1906,

relentlessly endeavoured to defend and promote the Muslims' cause and promptly acquired undisputed status of the sole representative body of the Muslims. The concept of a separate Muslim homeland turned into a vociferous demand and was reflected in the famous resolution adopted unanimously at the 27th annual session of the Muslim League, held in Iqbal Park, Lahore on March 23, 1940. It was this historic Lahore Resolution which transformed geo-

political scene of South Asia to pave the way for the creation of Pakistan. The Lahore Resolution marked the peak of the long trailing freedom struggle of 100 million Muslims of the sub-continent and signified focal point of their destiny, Pakistan.

As soon as the demand for Pakistan was raised, its opponents mounted an intense anti-Pakistan harangue to stifle it. But the Muslims, undaunted by intrigues and vicious designs of the inimical forces, carried their march forward with a stronger resolve and unwavering determination. They stood behind the Quaid-i-Azam like an impenetrable wall and the Quaid guided them to their destiny.

While Pakistanis celebrate the 49th anniversary of their independence now, just one year from crossing the spectacular mark of half-a-century of its sovereign entity, it should, indeed, be interesting to broadly recapitulate performance of this young nation in the course of its independent life and to appraise its present state and future course.

The country which set about its free life with almost zero industrial base has made significant strides in commerce, finance, communications, water and power, energy, agriculture and agro-based industry. In absolute terms, the country presents an impressive profile of its economic success. The graph of macro indicators of the economy has consistently been ascending at varied paces.

The economic and social agenda, being firmly pursued

by the Government of Pakistan, seeks to alleviate poverty, eliminate diseases and overcome ignorance. The development plank of the agenda represents a multi-splendoured enterprise to turn Pakistan into a vibrant, dynamic middle income nation.

The country, currently undergoing pangs of transition to achieve qualitative transformation in its body polity, astonishingly brews with tenacity of purpose which gives hope and promise. It is passing through an excitingly crucial phase that inspires awe and tantalises imagination. And it is poised to capture countless possibilities of regeneration and growth in a unipolar world.

The dramatic changes following the disintegration of the Soviet Union have impacted heightened significance to Pakistan's geopolitical dimensions to meet challenges of new global environs. The Government of Pakistan, besides redefining the charter of the country's socio-economic priorities, has launched a crusade against terrorism, smuggling, drug trafficking, corruption and ethnic violence, which has enhanced the prestige of Pakistan tremendously in the comity of the nations and successfully turned the land into a frontline state in the region. By all indicators, the country now appears set to enter the 21st century as a nation rebuilt on the model envisioned by the Quaid-i-Azam (Inshallah).

Message from Ambassador: 'Anniversary is an occasion for self-examination and analysis of achievements'

THIS YEAR Pakistan is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of its independence from colonial rule. This important milestone in our nation's history is a moment of great celebration and rejoicing in Pakistan. Fifty years ago, our struggle for a separate and sovereign state of Pakistan, under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, finally culminated in the establishment of the new state of Pakistan. This achievement was the result of the determined effort, untiring hard work and sacrifice of life and property made by millions of Muslims of the sub-continent, in an epic struggle for a homeland of their own, whose saga is now part of current history. We believe that the creation of Pakistan is one of the momentous developments of the twentieth century and has had a decisive impact upon the course of contemporary history.



Pakistani Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi

Our National Day in this fiftieth anniversary year, besides being a day of rejoicing and festivity for our country and people, is equally an occasion for self-examination and analysis of what we have achieved and what remains to be done. It is a time to take measure of whether we have fulfilled the expectations and ideals of our founding fathers, especially the Quaid-i-Azam. It is also a day for renewing our collective pledge to uphold the principles for which Pakistan was created. It is a day when we vow once again to overcome internal strife and to uphold the values of national unity, ethnic harmony and religious tolerance. Following our national elections earlier this year, the new government of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, has come to office with an overwhelming mandate of the people. The government has brought with it a new reform-oriented programme aimed at strengthening the economy, running a reduced and clean government and advancing social development through building of infrastructure and consolidating the institutions of the state.

On the foreign policy front, Pakistan accords the highest priority to its relations with its brothers and sisters in the Arab and Muslim nations across the world. The people of Pakistan share with the Arab World their spiritual faith and related values. Our people also share with the Arabs and Muslims of other countries common traditions of culture and society. Our commitment to a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, the alleviation of the sufferings of the Palestinian people and the fulfilment of their aspirations remains constant and unaltered. Together with the rest of the Muslim Ummah, we continue to strive for peace and justice all over the globe. Our thoughts are directed to the trials and tribulations of our Muslim brothers and sisters in Kashmir, who are struggling for their right of self-determination in accordance with United Nations resolutions, as well as those in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina and wherever else they find themselves in difficulties.

Pakistan and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan constitute a fraternity of common interests and aspirations. Ours are indeed two brotherly countries sharing each other's trials and triumphs. Our friendship and solidarity has stood the test of time and will, Inshallah, grow from strength to strength. We salute the outstanding progress and development achieved by Jordan under the dynamic and enlightened leadership of His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal. We pray to Allah Almighty that Jordan may continue to advance and progress and that its people may attain well-being and prosperity. Amen. May the friendship between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan last forever. Amen.

Quaid-i-Azam and Pakistan resolution of March 1940

By Dr. Riaz Ahmad

FIFTY-SEVEN years have passed since the adoption of Lahore resolution in March 1940 by the All-India Muslim League, the largest representative party of the South Asian (British Indian) Muslims, but the importance of this resolution, popularly known as the Pakistan Resolution, has never diminished. This resolution determined the contours of Muslim State of Pakistan established after seven years of its adoption. The basic nature of this resolution, whose details are to follow, was to enable the people of the majority Muslim areas of British India to exercise their democratic right to establish their own state in the South Asian sub-continent. This resolution reflected the will of Muslim India to separate from the majority Hindu areas as the Muslims' grievances were not redressed. During the seven years following the adoption of this resolution, no genuine effort was made on the part of the

Indian Congress leaders to alleviate the Muslim grievances. Instead, the Hindu-Muslim differences intensified from worse to worst making the Muslims realise their cherished goal of Pakistan.

The Pakistan scheme of Quaid-i-Azam (Great Leader) Muhammad Ali Jinnah was presented at the 27th session of the All-India Muslim League held in Lahore in March 1940 in the form of a resolution. As the language of the resolution runs, it was put: "Resolved that it is the considered view of the session of the All India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslim unless it is designed on the following basic principles. Viz, that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial re-adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and

Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute Independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."

This resolution was presented on March 23 and approved the next day after having been fully debated by representatives from all parts of South Asia. As Jinnah planned, the resolution was moved by A.K. Fazlul Haq, Premier of Bengal, Choudhry Khaliq-uz-Zaman, leader from U.P., seconded it, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, editor of the popular Urdu daily Zamindar supported the resolution. Other leaders who spoke in favour of the resolution were Sardar Aurangzeb Khan, leader of the opposition in the NWFP Assembly, Sir Abdullah Haroon, a veteran leader from Sind, Khan Bahadur Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan, president of the U.P. Muslim League, Mohammad Isa Khan, a leader from Baluchistan, Abdul Hamid Khan, leader of the Muslim League Party in the Madras Assembly, Ismail Chundrigar,

Deputy leader of the Muslim League Party in the Bombay Assembly, Syed Abdur Rauf Shah, president of the C.P. Muslim League, Dr. Mohanmad Alam from the Punjab, Syed Zakir Ali, Begum Mohammad Ali, widow of late Maulana Mohammad Ali, and Maulana Abdul Hamid. None of them spoke against the resolution. After the debate was concluded on March 24 the resolution was passed unanimously amid great enthusiasm. Thus it was with the consent of Muslims of all regions representing the minority and majority Muslim areas that the idea of Pakistan was approved. This reflected the unity of the will of the Muslims of South Asia which backed Quaid-i-Azam in his scheme of Pakistan.

This was not a new idea. Various ideas for the division of South Asian sub-continent into Hindu zone and Muslim zone had already been put forward. John Bright in the late 19th century was the first to suggest in this direction. This idea was thus carried forward by various British, Muslim and Hindu thinkers, but all ideas were mere talking in the air, nothing doing with the favourable public opinion. It goes to the credit of Quaid-i-Azam and his followers that first they

mobilised Muslim public opinion, both in the historical and political sense, and then presented the idea. An idea coming in this background duly enjoyed the support of the whole of Muslim India.




Quaid-i-Azam was the man who had strong sense of history. He not only rightly interpreted the historical development in the contemporary realities, but also a person who thought in the line of giving new direction to history. He also understood the main forces which shaped history. At the national and international levels, it was the British government which formed the greatest force of history. In the internal political developments it was Indian Congress leaders who were another big factor in history representing the Hindu majority will against the idea of Pakistan. Jinnah, in his long political career of working with the Congress leaders since his entry into politics in 1897, had visualised that the Congress leaders were not allowing the Muslims any respectable position in the body-politics of South Asia. For making the Muslims the third major factor in South Asia, Jinnah got the chance of World War II started in September 1939. On this issue he challenged the Congress and

negotiated with the British Viceroy and made him realise that the Muslims were the third major political force without whose consent the future of South Asia could not be determined. Through his wise policies Quaid-i-Azam brought unity amongst the rank and file of the Muslims at the sub-continent level. After having achieved this unity during the years 1934-39 he presented the goal of Pakistan for their approval in March of 1940. With the united Muslim support Jinnah was now ready to deal with the Congress leaders.

It was for the first time in history that the British government came to appreciate Jinnah's importance in politics. Sir Henry Craik, governor of the Punjab, reported to the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow that "the session has greatly enhanced Jinnah's prestige and influence and that the unanimity and enthusiasm shown at the session have given the League a position of far greater authority than it previously enjoyed." (Craik to Linlithgow, March 31, 1940, Linlithgow Papers).

But Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, in his letter to the

(Continued on page 9)


Best wishes and heartest congratulations on the Golden Jubilee (50 Anniversary) of Pakistan Independence.

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Bahrain Valley in Swat provide excellent hiking opportunities

Valleys that hold majestic beauty and tranquillity

THERE'S A world of holidays right here in Pakistan. Balistan, Gilgit, Chitral, Kohistan, Swat, Kaghan, Skardu, Hunza and Ziarat are some of the many places to visit. In the environs of some of the world's highest peaks and awesome glaciers are green valleys, fruit laden orchards, crystal-clear lakes, historical monuments, scenes and sights that would overshadow other renowned holiday resorts in the world.

The climate is bracing, the air clean and the people warm and hospitable. There are plentiful activities. Trekking, hiking and mountaineering, golf, polo exhibition matches, festivals, fishing, white water sports, shopping for hand-woven fabrics and handicrafts. There's flavour in the local cuisine and delicious fruit that you can just pick off the trees.

Take a drive on the epic Karakoram Highway, up the 16,000-foot high Khyber Pass apply called the roof of the world; here in the north of Pakistan, you'll discover a sport where time stands still. It will be a perfect gateway.

Swat Valley

The Valley of Swat with its rushing torrents, lakes, fruit-laden orchards and flower-bedecked slopes is an idyllic valley. Swat is 2,250 feet high in altitude. Mingora is the district headquarters and a commercial centre of Swat. Mianam is a very picturesque tourist resort, surrounded by terraced fields, snow-capped peaks, wild flowers and fruit trees. Bahrain in Swat provides excellent hiking opportunities. Kalam is located amidst towering snow clad

peaks at a high of 2,800 feet above sea level and at a distance of 24 miles from Saidu Sharif. The Valleys of Ushu, Utrot and Gabral beyond Kalam constitute some of the most beautiful parts of Swat, an ideal place for camping, trekking and mountaineering.

Gilgit Valley

Gilgit Valley offers spectacular scenic beauty. It is surrounded by lakes, glaciers and high mountain ranges. Some of the world's highest peaks, such as Nanga Parbat, 8,125 m and Rakaposhi 7,788 m are located here. Gilgit is accessible by air as well as by road from Islamabad/Rawalpindi over the Karakoram Highway. The favourite sport in Gilgit is polo.

Hunza Valley

Hunza is a land that offers much picturesque beauty to those who visit its majestic, snow-capped mountains, vast glaciers and beautiful orchards. It is 8,000 ft. above sea level. The world's second highest peak K-2, is in Hunza. The people of Hunza are well-known for their longevity which they attribute to their diet, the main ingredients of which are fruits, specially apricots, vegetables and Hunza water which the local says, apart from its high iron contents, carries traces of gold. Karimabad, the capital of Hunza, offers a magnificent view of Rakaposhi 7,787 m. The fairy tale-like castle of Baltit, 1.5 kms from Karimabad, is a Hunza landmark built about 600 years ago. Hunza is ideal for moun-

taineering, trekking and hiking. Hunza is accessible by road from Gilgit which is also connected by air and the Karakoram Highway with Rawalpindi/Islamabad.

Kaghan Valley

A holiday in the Kaghan Valley is an unforgettable experience. Its mountains, dales, lakes, waterfalls, streams and glaciers are in an unbelievably pristine state, an unspoiled paradise. The adventure begins in Balakot, a charming mountain village, from where a road climbs 34 km up to Shogran which has thickly forested slopes and grassy meadows. Fishing is the main sport in Kaghan. The Kunhar River trout is considered best in the sub-continent. Saiful Muluk lake near Naran is actually a volcanic crater now filled with crystal-clear waters brimming with rainbow trout. It is 3,200 m above sea level. Kaghan Valley is accessible by road via Abbottabad from Rawalpindi/Islamabad and Peshawar.

Chitral Valley

The Chitral Valley is popular with mountaineers, anglers, hunters, hikers, naturalists and anthropologists. Chitral is at a height of 3,800 ft. above sea level. It is located high in the Hindu Kush mountains. This valley contains much scenic beauty, with orchards, fields and snow-clad peaks. The most interesting features are its boiling sulphur springs, famous for their healing effects in skin diseases, gout, rheumatism and chronic headaches.

Blending religion and democracy in a modern Muslim state

By Khalid Akhtar

PAKISTAN'S ENDEAVOURS to emerge on the world's scene as a modern and progressive Islamic state have paid rich dividends. Today Pakistan enjoys the singular honour of being a modern Muslim democratic state.

Both Islam and democracy stand for enlightenment and modernisation. But bow the two were to blend together was a big challenge. Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the father of the nation, had laid down that Pakistan was to be an Islamic and democratic state.

Islam and democracy were to be Pakistan's destiny. It could not separate one from the other. Doing so was to be a disaster. Thus started Pakistan's long march of blending Islam and modern democracy.

Pakistan's progress in building itself into an Islamic and democratic state was somewhat disturbed by the early demise of the Quaid-i-Azam. Had he lived a bit longer he would have overseen the delicate and sensitive process of blending of Islam and democracy to a desired level without any controversy.

When the leaders of the Pakistan Freedom Movement said that Pakistan was to be an Islamic state, they did not mean that it was to be theocratic state. Some elements did try to derail Pakistan from its march to become a modern Islamic democratic state. But they had at no time any chance of success and they were soon forced into oblivion by a massive majority who stood for progress and modernisation.

As a matter of fact the Muslim polity right from the beginning had practised democracy. During the time of Prophet Muhammad (PDUH) and Khulfa-i-Rasidin, when the Muslim empire stretched over large areas all major decisions of the state were taken in Masjidi-Nabvi through consultations. No people had shown greater regard for democracy than the Muslims whose rulers allowed themselves to be questioned by their subjects and then considered it their sacred duty to satisfy them. This was real democracy. The rich Islamic history and traditions served as a

guide and beacon light to steer Pakistan on the road to Islamisation and democracy. Today Pakistan has all the democratic institutions which function within the precincts of Islam. There are Sharia courts which interpret Islamic laws in the light of changed conditions. Any law or constitutional provision which is not in keeping with the Islamic injunctions can be struck down by the courts.

The Muslim World at the moment is passing through a very difficult phase. A filthy campaign has been launched by some inimical powers to paint Islam as a retrogressive force which must be crushed at all costs. It has fallen to the lot of democratic and modern Muslim states like Pakistan to fight this campaign and project a true picture of Islam. How well and efficiently Pakistan is doing this is acknowledged by all.

The Feb. 3 elections and their results have been a strong reaffirmation of the popular quest for progress and modernisation.

Interestingly, India, which has posed itself to be a liberal and progressive state and accepted so by the world at large, particularly the West, has rapidly moved towards fundamentalism. The secular Congress has lost much of the ground and has been relegated to the second position. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) whose declared objective is to convert the secular India into a Hindu India, has emerged as the leading party. It just failed to form its government after the last general elections when it could not win the vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha.

It is generally believed that the BJP is going to form the next government in India after the general elections which are expected to be held sooner than expect-

ed. It is India's threatening transformation towards Hinduism that is worrying Pakistan.

It is hoped that it will be soon realised where fundamentalism is flourishing, and what threat it is going to pose to the already disturbed area. However, this would not distract Pakistan's march towards modernisation and Islamic democracy.

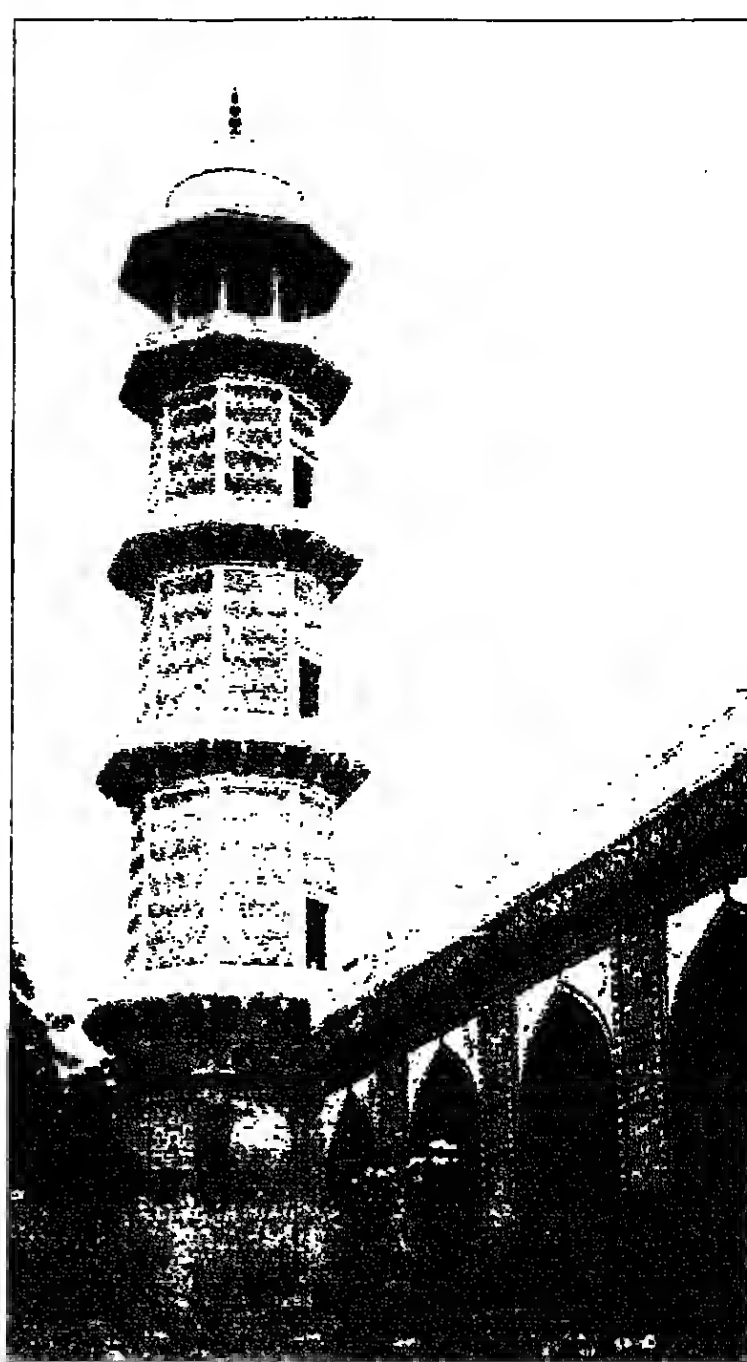
Today Pakistani soldiers are serving under the U.N. flag in various disturbed areas. They served in hostile Somalia and in hazardous Bosnia and won applause for Pakistan. They have been the symbol of a democratic Muslim Pakistan which is all set to enter the 21st century with a strengthened image of an Islamic democratic state.

The holding of the Islamic Summit in Islamabad on March 23 which would mark the beginning of the Golden Jubilee

celebrations of the country's independence and its likely outcome should be a forceful cry to the world that the Muslim World is a progressive block and not the retro-

gressive force as is being projected by some. The holding of the Islamic Summit in Lahore in 1974 did a lot of good to the Muslim World. Hopefully the com-

ing summit would do equally good to the Muslims. Pakistan, of course, feels proud of hosting the Islamic Summit at a crucial juncture.



A minaret of Emperor Jahangir's tomb, Lahore — specimen of Muslim architecture in Pakistan

Quaid-i-Azam

(Continued from page 8)

Viceroy expressed certain misgivings which were soon cleared by the Viceroy through subsequent correspondence (Lalithgoh Papers).

The realisation of the importance of the Pakistan Resolution by the British government made it negotiate the matter with Jinnah in the coming years in the form of various commissions and deputations, such as Cripps Mission, Cabinet Mission and finally ending with Lord Mountbatten's June 3, 1947 plan by which Pakistan came to be established on Aug. 14, 1947.

To many it seemed that Jinnah is pleading something which would be tantamount to tearing the Hindu cow's parading or division of the country. Dispelling all such false arguments Jinnah made it clear in his presidential address that "the Mussalmans are a nation by any definition" and they occupy large parts of the country — "such as Bengal, Punjab, NWFP, Sind and Baluchistan." People of these areas not only have their distinct cultures but they derive inspiration from a source of history which was different from that of the Hindus. Elaborating it further in the world context Jinnah argued: "History has presented to us many examples, such as the Union of Great Britain and Ireland, of Czechoslovakia and Poland. History has also shown to us many geographical tracts, much smaller than the subcontinent of India, which otherwise might have been called one country, but which have

been divided into as many states as there are nations inhabiting them. The Balkan Peninsula comprises as many as seven or eight sovereign states. Likewise, the Portuguese and the Spanish stand divided in the Iberian Peninsula. Whereas under the pleas of the unity of India and one nation, which does not exist, it is sought to pursue here the line of one Central government, when we know that the history of the last 12 hundred years has failed to achieve unity and has witnessed, during the ages, (That) India (was) always divided into Hindu India and Muslim India." (Pirzada, p. 338).

The writer is Professor, Quaid-i-Azam Chair, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.



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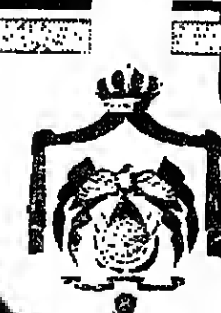



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Gulf oil states invest heavily in domestic refining

DUBAI (R) — Gulf oil states are ploughing billions of dollars into refineries to meet growing world demand for quality transport and heating fuels in the next decade, oil industry executives and analysts have said.

Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kuwait are leading the move to install sophisticated units at existing refineries to lift the volume and improve the quality of high-value products such as petrol, diesel, kerosene and jet fuel.

"Refiners want more flexibility to match world demand, particularly south-east Asia, from India to the Philippines and China... They can see that the money is in meeting the huge increase in motor fuel use from that region," said an industry analyst based in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia, the world's leading oil producer, has allocated \$1.2 billion to upgrade its Ras Tanura plant on the Gulf coast and a further \$1.7 billion to develop its Rabigh refinery on the Red Sea coast.

State-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) is expected to spend close to \$1.5 billion by 2002 to carry out a two-phase revamp of its Ruwais plant.

The expansion and upgrading of refineries in the Gulf is in contrast to consolidation and closure of refining and marketing systems owned by major oil firms in Europe and the United States, where profits have been severely damaged by overcapacity.

"The investments are not much of a risky bet... Even with additional (refining) capacity in Asia, import demand there will be great," the analyst said.

Gulf refineries have traditionally been simple distillation plants that produced mainly heavy fuel oil sold at a sharp discount to light fuels such as petrol. Lack of upgrading units led even major refiners such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE to import petrol and diesel just to meet local demand.

State-subsidised retail prices have led to near double-digit annual petroleum

demand growth in the Gulf and private firms, particularly in the UAE, are setting up small refineries to keep pace with higher Gulf use.

Investment by state-refiners is centred on units to increase hydrocracking capacity which increases gas oil output from processing fuel oil, catalytic reforming which improves gasoline yields, condensate handling capacity and desulphurisation units to meet stricter environmental rules.

The work, mainly at Saudi Arabia's Ras Tanura and the UAE's Ruwais refineries, will increase total product exports from the region by 600,000 barrels per day (bpd) to 2.2 million bpd by the year 2000, according to analysts Seattle Research and Training Centre (SRTC).

Output of light-ends such as petrol and middle distillates like diesel will reach 72 per cent of total refinery production in 2000 from 69 per cent in 1995 while refining capacity will hit 5.99 million bpd from 5.3 million bpd, according to SRTC.

DUBAI (AFP) — Palestinian political and business leaders attending a trade fair have appealed to exiles in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to help build the economy of the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

"The situation is difficult. We go from one crisis to the next and we are asking for your support to build the Palestinian economy," Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Economy Minister Maher Al Masri told Palestinians in the UAE.

"We urge you to help us introduce our products to the Emirates and other Gulf countries, just as you helped create the Palestinian entity" in 1994, the minister said.

He also announced plans for the opening soon of a Palestinian trade office in Dubai.

"The businessmen of the diaspora are hesitant and their investment in the self-rule areas remain modest compared to their financial strength, because of the instability of the situation," said Abdul Karim Kanaan, a representative of the Arab Bank, one of the biggest

financial institutions in these areas.

He said Palestinian industrialists abroad had come "en masse at the start of the peace process, but the hard-line right-wing Likud's arrival in power had shattered their dream of investing their money."

The officials were speaking to representatives of some of the 80,000 Palestinians living in the Emirates who had gathered for the Palestinian trade fair in the UAE commercial hub of Dubai.

During the five-day event, 70 small businesses launched in Gaza and the West Bank with local capital have displayed farm products, textiles, marble, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics as well as construction material.

They want to use Dubai as a bridgehead to sell their products in the Gulf and Asia.

"We are counting on you to buy and on your connections to sell our products," Palestinian industrialist Mazen Sinokort said.

UAE investors also appear "hesitant amid the uncertainties of the peace

process," an official accompanying the Palestinian minister told AFP on condition he not be named.

"They have advised us on how to penetrate the Dubai market and meet the competition (...) but they are prudent when we discuss direct investment," he added.

Palestinian businessman Ihsan Abdul Nabi said meanwhile that the "contribution of Palestinians from outside is needed to build our young economy and emerge from under Israel's

grip."

"Investment opportunities are encouraging in the self-rule areas. Nine industrial zones are being built in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and new laws are being drafted by the Palestinian National Authority," he said. The PNA estimates that its export revenues amount to around \$350 million a year, a figure which it said could be raised to \$1 billion by 2000.

Palestinian industry is only at 40 per cent of capacity, the Palestinian minister said. Its development has been hampered by many closures of the self-rule areas by Israeli authorities reacting to attacks on Israelis.

Christopher Crowley, an official with the U.S. aid group tasked with helping the Palestinian private sector, said the United States and international donors, including the World Bank, are trying to persuade Israel to shield Palestinian exports from the closures.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Steady changes which seem inevitable today, plan them well and you can handle them correctly. Don't make any commitments later this evening which could cause difficulty with your mate or fellow business associates. **TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Forget financial concerns and pay more attention to your mate today. Spend as much time as necessary later this evening in revising your budget so that you will have extra funds for any emergencies.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Find out what it is your fellow associates want from you today, and be willing to make revisions to contracts if you are asked to do so. Later this evening is a good time for you to consult with knowledgeable people for advice.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Make sure you give "a dollar's labour for a dollar's pay" today. Don't allow a greedy fellow business associate to upset you later this evening by making demands upon your time without praise or compensation.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Forget about yourself for a while today and do something kind for your mate. If you make any contributions later this evening, be sure the cause is worthwhile and will not get you into a difficult situation.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) A family friend does not approve of a situation you're involved in today, so don't bring it up or dwell on it. Keep any promises you have made to close friends, your mate or fellow associates and thereby retain your reputation.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be more willing to accept modern ways of operating today, rather than hanging on to the past so much. Offer your assistance to a family friend who is having a difficult situation and you can make him or her feel better.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You may be tempted to enter into a business deal today, however, look it over carefully and be sure it's worthwhile. Play it safe later this evening and in the days ahead by meeting with a bigwig and present your ideas.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You can't decide today which has more merit — the old or the new — so use the best of each to get any career activities completed. Don't let a property matter confuse you later this evening by discussing it with your mate.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You should not keep a current situation so confidential today that you lose out where it counts the most. Give information concerning any business venture to those who are involved and gain prosperity.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Some friends may try to convince you to follow their ideas today, however, stick to your own. Enjoy some quiet time alone for thinking later this evening, any thereby you can handle any difficulties which come in your direction.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Be cautious in your speech and actions today, as you may have a tendency to do or say the wrong thing and offend some important people. Later this evening will be a good time to spend a romantic time with your mate.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper.

Palestinian exiles urged to help build economy of West Bank, Gaza Strip

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	HKD	SGD	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6878	0.6234	1.4595	122.50	1.3788	168.44	1.5040	5.6845
De Mark	0.5984	1.0000	0.4936	0.5636	136.75	0.7736	93.80	0.8936	3.3757
GB Sterling	1.6040	2.7040	1.0000	1.9833	160.40	2.2116	270.40	2.4836	9.1179
Swiss Franc	0.6848	1.7722	0.5084	1.0000	136.75	0.7736	93.80	0.8936	3.3757
Yen	0.0082	1.3772	0.5084	1.1909	1.0000	1.1251	13.79	158.37	4.6385
Can Dollar	0.7276	1.2216	0.4516	0.6459	0.8000	1.0000	74.46	0.7000	2.4637
HK Dollar	0.0078	0.9984	0.3488	0.6853	1381.22	0.8158	1.0000	11.28	3.3627
Singapore Dollar	0.6776	1.2216	0.4516	0.6459	0.8000	1.0000	74.46	1.0000	2.4637
FR Franc	0.1759	0.2968	0.1096	0.1662	21.53	0.2425	33.48	33.4800	1.0000

Energy		Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	19.30	19.65		
Bony	19.30	19.65		
UL Gas	202.00	203.00		

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2867	0.4902	0.1662	0.3894	32.6787
KW Dinar	3.2949	5.5817	2.0542	4.8123	403.714
CY Pound	1.9733	3.3305	1.2295	2.88	241.729

Metal Prices			Gold (oz's)	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	352.85	353.15			
Platinum (oz's)	378.75	379.75			
CU (3 Months)	2378	2383			
Lead (3 Months)	692	695			
Al (3 Months)	1.0000	1.0000			

Currency Derivatives (Bid)					
Period	1	3	6	9	12
Month	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.50	5.62	5.75	5.83	5.89
JPY	0.62	0.62	0.65	0.50	0.78
DEM	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20
FRF	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20
ITL	7.31	7.31	7.21	7.20	7.16

Main Equity Indices					
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High
New York	DOW JONES	6804.79	-16.49	-0.23	6851.62
London	FT-SE 100	4254.3	-3.3	-0.08	4273.9
Paris	CAC 40	2587.13	33.41	1.31	2608.48
Frankfurt	DAX	2587.13	33.41	1.31	2608.48

Energy			Commodity	Last	Spot
Oil	178.57		Crude (oil)		
Sugar (ton)	304.8		Sugar		
Wheat (ton)	113.0		Wheat		
Soya (ton)	23.15		Soya		
Rice (ton)	135.0		Rice		
Barley (ton)	0		Barley		
Rice (ton)	135.0		Rice		

JOD Cross Rates			Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	US Dollar		
DE Mark	0.4169	0.421	DE Mark		
FR Franc	0.1244	0.125	FR Franc		
NL Guilder	0.3723	0.3742	NL Guilder		
IT Lira	1.3333	1.3333	IT Lira		

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Greenspan sets stage for increase in U.S. interest rates

WASHINGTON (R) — Federal Reserve (Fed) Chairman Alan Greenspan has set the stage for an increase in interest rates next week, stressing the importance of prompt action to keep inflation down before it hurts the economy.

In testimony to the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, he said the economy retains a "great deal of vigour" and called the prospects for a continued upswing "quite favourable."

The central bank's policy-making Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meets on Tuesday to consider raising short-term rates for the first time in over two years.

"Should we choose to alter monetary policy, we know from past experience that, although the financial markets may respond immediately, the main effects on inflationary pressures may not be felt until late this

year and in 1998," Mr. Greenspan said.

Stock prices fell as Mr. Greenspan's remarks heightened expectations on Wall Street for a rise in short-term rates next week. The Dow Jones industrial average of blue chip shares closed 57.40 points lower at 6,820.28.

Higher rates would slow the economy and prevent higher inflation, but would also crimp corporate profits by raising borrowing costs for consumers and companies.

Much of Mr. Greenspan's testimony seemed aimed at preparing lawmakers — who have often been critical of Fed policy in the past — for the possibility of a rate increase next week.

Pressed by committee chairman Jim Saxton to explain why the Fed was weighing higher rates now when inflation was low, Mr. Greenspan retorted

that the central bank needed to look ahead to anticipate price pressures in the future.

"What we at the Federal Open Market Committee are going to have to judge ... is not so much the question of where prices are or have been, but rather what is the state of the economy later this year and into 1998," he told the New Jersey House Republican.

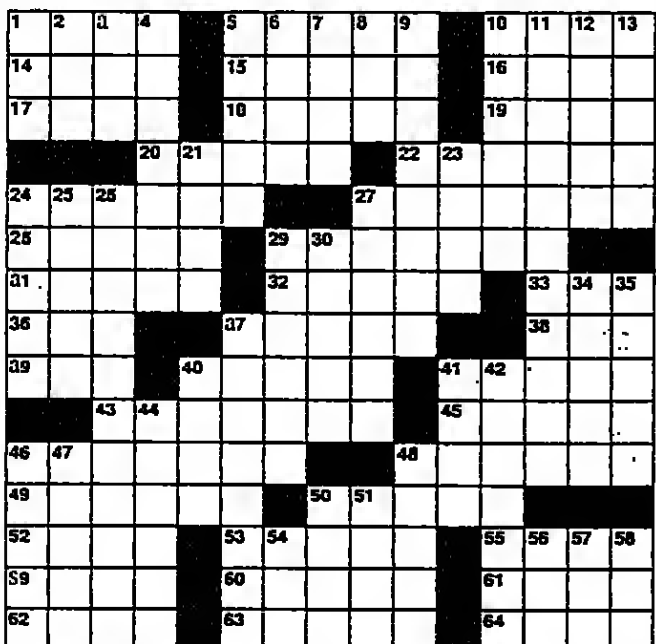
Mr. Greenspan saw upward pressure on underlying inflation this year as the labour market remains tight, encouraging workers to demand higher wages and companies to pay them.

So far, the tight job market has not led to higher inflation. Worried about losing their jobs, workers have held back from pushing for excessive pay hikes, while companies have been forced to keep prices down by competition.

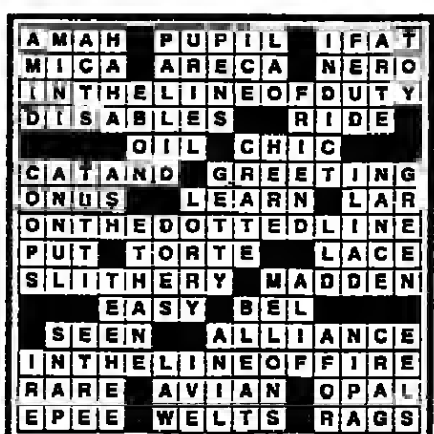
But Mr. Greenspan made clear that could only last so long and said that a further drop in the unemployment rate ran the risk of higher wages leading to faster inflation. The unemployment rate is now 5.3 per cent, just above an eight-year low.

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- Mild-mannered one
 - Savory meat jelly
 - Court proceedings
 - Stravinsky or Sikorsky
 - Restraint
 - Emil, as tears
 - Narcotic
 - Hawaiian island
 - Chinese: pref.
 - Spy
 - The Prince and the
 - Summon by gesture
 - Tell
 - Different
 - Theatrical producers
 - English county
 - Soft drinks
 - Excavated
 - Pacifier
 - Actor Wendell
 - Actress Joanna
 - Viper
 - Avoids
 - Put on
 - British and
 - Roman
 - Its capital is Cardiff
 - Rows of suspects
 - Remove gradually
 - Guarantee
 - Water (unable to cope)
 - Conform
 - Midge
 - New York island
 - Warrior of Greek myth
 - Wheel
 - Dress section
 - Church tribunal
 - Corner
 - Liturgical vestment
 - Printing term



by Matthew Higgins



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- DOWN
- Cover
 - Gone by

- Mass of hair
- Wave
- Tired out
- Secure tightly
- Window part
- "Rose — rose..."
- Remove gradually
- Guarantee
- Pesky Disney characters
- Principle
- Idolize
- Skirt insert
- Weapons
- nova
- Characteristic spirit
- Furniture style
- than (as much as)
- Cleans pots and pans
- Singer Lena
- Entreats
- Estimate
- Algonquian tribe
- Cast forth: var.
- Trade
- Mongol hordes
- " — in St. Louis, Louis"
- Carefree
- Circle or tube
- Social division
- Et —
- Plate
- Thrash
- Smallest bit
- Devoured
- Totem pole

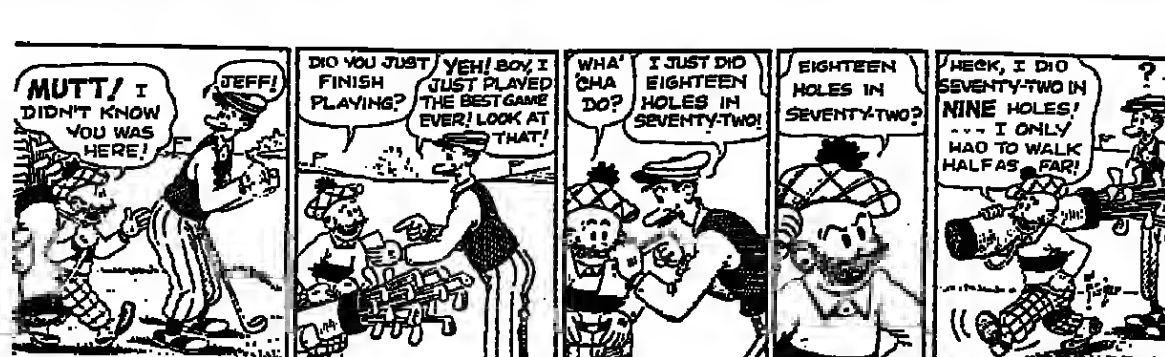
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



U.N. allows Jordanian firms to sell \$26m worth of goods to Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — The U.N. Sanctions Committee has approved requests by 10 Jordanian firms to export national products to Iraq worth \$26 million and Jordan is currently holding contacts with the same committee to approve exports by other firms worth \$120 million.

The announcement was made Saturday by Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary General Mohammad Smadi who said that the goods to be sold by the 10 firms include soap, chemical detergents and tissue paper.

Dr. Smadi said that the approval was within the framework of the U.N. oil-for-food deal which allows Baghdad to sell \$2 billion worth of oil every six months to buy food and medicine for the Iraqi people.

Dr. Smadi expressed hope that the U.N. Sanctions Committee will give approval in the coming few weeks for the sale of Jordanian products worth \$120 million to Iraq.

Jordanian, Vietnamese officials hold talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and Vietnam Saturday held talks on economic and trade links and agreed to sign a trade agreement between them Sunday.

Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Trade Minister Van Van Jay said after meeting Industry, Trade and Supply Minister Hani Mulgi that he was making a tour of the Middle East to build bilateral economic and trade relations with the countries of the region. He added that Vietnam wishes to establish strong economic ties and commercial links with Amman.

Mr. Jay, who is accompanied by a delegation of senior officials, said he was exploring areas where the two countries can make joint investments noting that the air transport agreement signed



Jordanian and Vietnamese officials holding talks

between Vietnam and Jordan in 1994 will be instrumental in promoting bilateral ties.

Noting that the projected agreement would promote bilateral trade links, Dr. Mulgi pointed out that Jordan can serve as a centre for transiting goods to Iraq and can also serve as a base for a joint Jordanian-Vietnamese textile and food industries.

Dr. Mulgi referred to Jordan's expected partnership agreement with the

European Union and indicated that the agreement is bound to open new opportunities for joint Jordanian-Vietnamese investments and can help Jordan serve as a base for re-exporting Vietnamese products to European countries.

According to Industry and Trade Ministry sources, trade between Jordan and Vietnam is currently in favour of Jordan as the Kingdom exported JD500,000 worth

of products to Vietnam in 1996 in exchange for JD330,000 worth of Vietnamese products.

The two sides discussed boosting trade relations through Jordanian exports of potash and phosphate and imports of more diversified Vietnamese products.

The Vietnamese delegation later visited the Amman Chamber of Commerce and held talks with its president and other private sector personalities.

World airports report 6% growth in passenger traffic last year

GENEVA (R) — World airports have reported strong growth in passenger traffic of over six per cent in 1996 with the flourishing economies of the Asia-Pacific region leading the upward surge.

And in a survey of 487 members around the globe, the Airports Council International (ACI) said while Chicago's O'Hare remained the world's busiest passenger hub, Los Angeles had replaced Dallas Fort Worth in third place behind Atlanta.

The Californian airport also pushed Tokyo's Narita out of second place in the cargo airport listing, which is still dominated by Memphis in Tennessee, headquarters of the giant Federal Express carrier.

Another strong showing was from Seoul, South Korea's international hub, which moved up from 11th place to 9th on both the passenger and cargo leagues with growth of 12 per cent.

The Geneva-based ACI said the global passenger returns for the year — one per cent up on 1995 — was largely due to a surge of 8.3 per cent in December over the already high returns for the same month in 1995.

A total of 2.5 billion people passed through all reporting airports during 1996, partly reflecting what analysts say is a steady worldwide growth in leisure travel.

The largest growth came in the Asia-Pacific region, where 577 million people passed through airports, an increase of just under seven per cent over 1995.

North American airports were close behind with an increase of 6.3 per cent for a much larger passenger total of 1.2 billion, and Europe returned growth of 6.2 per cent with passengers totalling 733 million.

ACI director of economics, Paul Behnke, told Reuters the overall figures showed good overall potential for the industry — whose airlines reported recently that their net profits had fallen sharply last year.

In its own annual report last week, the airlines body IATA said low fares and high fuel costs had cut profits from a record \$5.2 billion in 1995 to \$4 billion last year, although they were expected to climb back to \$4.4 billion this year.

Mr. Behnke said the only disappointing returns from airports had come from the Latin American and Caribbean region, where poor results from Mexico and Venezuela had held back overall passenger growth to 1.6 per cent.

Africa, which had a bad year in 1995 with a net decline in passenger traffic, came back in 1996 with 4.8 per cent growth for a total of 29 million. The Middle East recorded 45 million passengers, a growth of 5.2 per cent.

Industry analysts said Los Angeles' jump from fifth to third busiest airport in the world league appeared partly to reflect a growth in domestic traffic. It saw 57.9 million pass through, an increase of 7.5 per cent.

Chicago's O'Hare, in first place, processed 69 million travellers, 2.8 per cent up on 1995, and second-placed Atlanta — boosted by hosting the Olympic Games — was up 9.7 per cent for a total of 63 million.

London's Heathrow was fourth, the same position it held in final ACI figures for 1995, with 56 million passengers for a growth rate of 2.9 per cent. Dallas-Fort Worth — where some major U.S. carriers have cut operations — dropped from third into fifth place with 55 million passengers.

Top five cargo airports were Memphis, which moved 1.9 million tonnes, Los Angeles which moved 1.72 million, Miami which moved 1.7 million, New York's JFK with 1.63 million and Tokyo's Narita with 1.62 million.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Social Security Corporation boosts investments to JD861.7m, earns JD61.7m in returns in 1996

THE SOCIAL Security Corporation earned a total of JD61.7 million in returns on its investments such as interest on bank deposits and on loans as well as dividends on equity held in various companies in addition to other income, the corporation's deputy general manager Isa Hanania said in a lecture, Mr. Hanania also revealed the total investments of the Social Security Corporation (SSC) has increased from JD744.5 million at the end of 1995 to JD861.7 million at the end of last year.

The senior SSC official told his audience that the corporation is currently studying the possibility of establishing key projects such as investing in the generation of electrical power. He explained that the corporation has conducted a preliminary study on the demand for power and the initial feasibility of investment. This study was presented to the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in order to attract a suitable technical partner to conduct detailed studies to specify the viability of such an investment, Mr. Hanania said. He estimated the required investment to meet the demand for electric power after the year 2000 at between \$500 million to \$700 million.

The corporation has also conducted a preliminary study on setting up an industrial city that would lead to developing an integrated and free city to serve the economic and development targets, Mr. Hanania indicated.

Mr. Hanania said the SSC would be shouldering an extra cost of about JD10 million per year over the coming five years as a result of increasing retirement salaries from Jan. 1, 1996. The increase will be 10 per cent on the average with a minimum of no less than JD15 monthly and no more than JD50 for every retired person (Al Aswaj).

Jordanian exports reach 120 Arab and international markets

ACCORDING TO Bashar Khasawneh, director of promotion and at Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation (JEDCO), Jordanian products reached 120 outside markets last year. Of those markets, 15 were new such as those of Estonia, Croatia, Iceland, South Africa and Tanzania. He indicated that despite the fact that 45 per cent of Jordanian exports go to Arab countries, the exports to other non-traditional markets have also surged such as exports to Spain, Romania, United States, Italy as well as other Asian markets such as Iran, Turkey, China and Philippines. Exports to most of these countries have registered a 100 per cent increase last year, Mr. Khasawneh pointed out (Al Aswaj).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 22/03/1997											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / R	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADS	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
2.100	1.850	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	E	0.00	17	25430	48338	1.87	1.90	.03	N
3.650	2.760	BANK OF JORDAN	10.1	0.52	6	17150	48580	2.80	2.80	-	
5.150	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	12.6	2.94	9	9306	43291	4.63	4.70	.07	
1.090	.840	JOR. GULF BANK	5.0	8.33	1	1500	1260	.85	.84	.01	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 194.35 CHNG: +0.16											
2.740	1.830	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.4	10.53	1	100	190	1.90	1.90	-	
2.600	2.420	ARAB UNIV. INTL. INSUR.	5.4	0.00	1	250	575	2.42	2.30	.12	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 119.12 CHNG: 0.00											
1.830	1.450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.4	7.32	4	3000	4920	1.65	1.64	.01	I
6.960	6.000	VEHICLES, OWNERS FZO.	8.0	4.79	1	100	731	6.96	7.31	.35	
2.800	2.090	SHIPPING LINES	10.1	8.23	1	1000	2400	2.40	2.40	-	
1.540	1.060	NATL. PORTFOLIO	27.7	7.33	6	4950	4943	1.00	1.00	-	
1.050	.820	REAL ESTATE INV.	9	0.00	5	1350	693	.80	.83	.03	
.800	.410	NATL. EMP. RET. PLAN	9	0.00	5	1350	4957	1.18	1.25	.07	
3.720	3.040	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	12.8	6.15	3	750	1825	1.73	1.71	.02	
2.230	1.650	UNIFIED CO.	6.1	2.00	3	750	1825	1.73	1.71	.02	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 105.13 CHNG: +0.75											
2.730	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.8	2.75	21	13499	48590	3.61	3.63	.02	
10.400	8.720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.3	7.88	9	1265	12842	10.16	10.15	.02	
3.300	1.650	INDUSTRIAL COSMOP.	31.6	0.00	6	950	2027	2.64	2.35	.09	
3.300	1.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	30.0	5.48	6	1523	5562	3.74	3.55	.09	
2.450	2.050	JORDAN DAIRY	15.3	0.00	1	1000	2900	2.45	2.50	.05	
5.440	3.130	ARAB ALUM. IND.	8.1	9.21	1	250	2839	.59	.58	.01	
.950	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	7	4900	2839	.59	.58	.01	
1.020	.540	NATIONAL INS.	9.3	9.52	17	12000	7560	.62	.63	.01	
1.540	.870	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	6	2000	1780	.91	.89	.02	
3.730	2.130	ARAB CABLE WIRE	14.2	0.00	3	400	1406	2.23	2.34	.11	
1.670	1.080	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	14.6	0.00	10	7750	3218	1.44	1.43	.01	
2.740	1.440	UNIV. MODN. INDUS.	4.7	12.87	2	500	776	1.56	1.56	-	
1.820	1.140	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	11.5	0.00	85	44500	61098	1.35	1.39	.04	
3.270	.840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	13.4	0.00	6	2950	7581	.88	.87	.01	
2.400	1.750	EL. - FAY READY WEAR	9	0.00	3	350	638	1.82	1.83	.01	
1.360	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	7.1	2.00	4	4100	4115	1.17	1.15	.02	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 118.10 CHNG: +0.13											
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 153.60 CHNG: +0.13											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 22/03/1997											
.690	.430	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	15.5	0.00	10	18550	8462	.44	.46	.02	
.780	.460	JOR. TRADE FAC.	12.8	0.00	2	1250	600	.48	.48	-	
.950	.770	JOR. PET. INV. CO. 75	31.6	0.00	37	27580	11390	.77	.75	.02	
.850	.690	UNION INV. 501	66.0	0.00	13	5370	1018	.69	.69	-	
.840	.570	ARAB FYN. INVEST.	9	0.00	2	600	246	.42	.41	.01	
.950	.770	AL-SHARQ INV. 752	9	0.00	3	4500	2241	.78	.77	.01	
.740	.510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	3	2000	1140	.57	.57	-	
1.690	1.300	NATL. CHLORINE	9	0.00	5	1424	1991	1.39	1.40	.01	
.690	.430	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	9	0.00	2	105	45	.43	.43	-	
.740	.490	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	10	32484	14293	.44	.44	-	
.850	.400	NATL. HULF. IND. KAMICO	9	0.00	5	1450	9953	.74	.74	-	
.990	.720	JORDAN STEEL	9	0.00	5	250	128	.51	.51	-	
.700	.430	ARAB ELECT. INDUS.	9	0.00	3	1200	628	.94	.94	-	
1.330	.940	UNION TOBACCO 75	9	0.00	3	250	60	.59	.59	-	
.770	.570	RAZI PHARM. 65	9	0.00	1	500	340	.68	.68	.01	
.820	.590	NATL. POULTRY	9	0.00	42	99400	77923	.80	.78	.02	
.870	.530	HID. EAST COMPLEX	9.1	0.00	42	99400	77923	.80	.78	.02	
GRAND TOTAL											
						171	205064	131222			

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JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argison

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HECKE

OPYPP

RAPTYN

PRUMAK

Smells great... what a nice day!

Is breakfast ready?

MAKING THE MORNING COFFEE LEFT HER...

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: **HECKE**

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: HELLO SHEEP BEATEN CLOVEN Answer: You might call a beauty pageant dance this - A BELLE HOP

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Jordanian team leaves for Davis Cup competition Monday

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's tennis team leaves for Muscat Monday to take part in the Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group 4 qualifiers which start in Oman March 26-30.

Jordan's group includes Syria, Tajikistan, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Brunei. Only the top two teams of the six-team group will be promoted to Group 3.

Under the supervision of head team coach Kathem Hussein, formerly Iraq's top ranked player, the team is putting its finishing touches on preparations hoping to score good results to qualify for Group 3 next year.

"We've been preparing for the tournament since December. I think we have a better chance this year," team captain and head of delegation Talal Maher Saturday told the Jordan Times.

"We concentrated on physical fitness which had always been a problem. Players really trained hard, and I hope will do well," Mr. Maher said.

Jordan had been relegated to Group 4 in 1995 and failed to be promoted last year after playing in groups 2 and 3 previously.

Countries participating in the annual team tournament are classified into five groups with the world's top teams playing in the prestigious World Group. The other countries are divided into four regional groups.

Players representing Jordan include Tharwat Qaisi, Ahmad Hadid and Ghassan Qadi. Faris Azzouni was included in the team after the Jordan Tennis Federation (JTF) recently lifted a one year suspension. Azzouni beat younger brother Leith and Khaled Naf'a in playoffs to qualify for the competition.

Mr. Maher thanked Al Barakeh sports apparel shops for their sponsorship of the team for the second consecutive year.

While the Jordan Tennis Federation (JTF) starts its 1997 agenda with the Davis Cup, a busy schedule awaits players in upcoming months.

Those include:

- The 6th Arab Championship for Juniors in July in Tunisia.
- The first Arab International Youth and the 11th Arab Championship in August in Cairo
- The 1st Arab Clubs Championship in Damascus
- The Arab coaches tournament
- The Arab Programme for the Development of Junior Tennis in Tunisia in July

The Davis Cup match schedule is as follows:

Wed. 26/3	Jordan vs. Tajikistan Oman vs. Brunei Syria vs. UAE
Thurs. 27/3	Syria vs. Tajikistan UAE vs. Brunei Oman vs. Jordan
Fri. 28/3	Tajikistan vs. Oman Syria vs. Brunei UAE vs. Jordan
Sat. 29/3	Tajikistan vs. UAE Oman vs. Syria Brunei vs. Jordan
Sun 30/3	Tajikistan vs. Brunei Oman vs. UAE Jordan vs. Syria



VfB Stuttgart's Bulgarian star Krassimir Balakow (R) evades a sliding tackle from Fortuna Dusseldorf's Rudi Isteni during their German first division soccer match in Dusseldorf March 21. Stuttgart went on to win the match 4-0 (Reuters photo)

Drug users return after 2 years

TURIN (AFP) — Three athletes given four-year drugs bans were reinstated after just two years by the ruling International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) Friday.

In a groundbreaking decision, the IAAF has now retreated from trying to impose a four-year ban in European and Asian countries where national legislation has a two-year maximum.

The IAAF council will also recommend that its congress in July scraps the four-year ban altogether, replacing it with two years. The trio were German long jumper Susan Tiedtke, compatriot Martin Brehmer, a distance runner, and South Korean 800m runner Lee Jin-Il.

Doping commission chief Arne Ljungqvist said the IAAF faced problems making the longer ban stick in no fewer than eight countries — Germany, Spain, France, Austria, Russia, Bulgaria, Romania and South Korea.

But he said that list was only provisional — "I doubt it could be enforced in Scandinavia but it hasn't been tested yet."

Explaining the move, which almost certainly sounds the death knell of the four-year drugs ban, the Swede said: "We have a rule which cannot be enforced."

"Even if it were only on one place on earth it would cause difficulties, but now we have it many places and many important (IAAF) member countries."

"So we face a fact and we have to deal with it and find a solution. Realising that a member cannot go against the law of one's country, in theory we have two mechanisms."

"One is that we expel the member because it cannot abide by our rules, the other is to use the council's rule which states that we can reinstate athletes under exceptional circumstances."

"And the council decided after long discussion to accept situations where for legal reasons our rules on the four-year ban cannot be applied, as exceptional circumstances."

Ljungqvist, who is also an IAAF vice-president, accepted the argument though that athletes in countries like Britain, which maintains the four-year ban, are now being penalised.

"Yes, but surely then the message to our British friends would be 'please understand that we cannot exercise a four-year ban — so let's make it two years everywhere'."

"That's why the council will support the proposal, that has come from three members, for congress to reduce the ban from four years to two. So that we get an equal punishment for the same offence."

He summed up: "It's an impossible situation and there's only one way out."

The controversial reduction has been discussed and rejected at two previous congress meetings, in Stuttgart in 1993 and Gothenburg in 1995, where Britain fought hard to keep the longer suspension.



Miami Heat point guard Tim Hardaway (L) drives on Los Angeles Lakers centre Eddon Campbell (R) in the first period of their NBA game. Miami defeated LA Lakers 98-97 (Reuters photo)

Hill leads Pistons past Minnesota

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan (R) — Grant Hill recorded his seventh triple-double of the season as the Detroit Pistons piled up 65 points in the first half en route to a 112-98 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Friday.

Hill had 22 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists and Otis Thorpe scored 18 of his 20 points in the first half for the Pistons, who led 65-46 at the intermission.

"We got off to a very good start tonight," Hill said. "This is a playoff-bound team and they made us work for every basket. We played with a lot of pride and passion."

Tom Gugliotta had 18 points and Kevin Garnett 16 for the Timberwolves, who fell back under the .500 mark at 33-34.

Aaron McKie netted eight points for Detroit in a 22-7 burst to open the second quarter.

The Wolves got as close as 84-76 with 42 seconds left in the third quarter, but Terry Mills and McKie buried back-to-back three-pointers as the Pistons pulled away again.

"I thought the end of the third quarter was really critical," Detroit coach Doug Collins said. "They cut it to eight, but we had back-to-back threes to push it to 14."

Joe Dumars had 18 points and Don Reid chipped in 14 points and 10 rebounds for the Pistons.

At Indiana, Michael Jordan scored 36 points and Scottie Pippen added 18 to lead the Chicago Bulls to a 117-98 victory over the Pacers.

Dennis Rodman grabbed 19 rebounds and Luc Longley had 15 points for Chicago, which remained eight games ahead of Miami for the best record in the Eastern Conference.

In Miami, Willie Anderson sank two free throws with 17 seconds left to lift the beat to their fifth straight win, a 98-97 triumph over the Los Angeles Lakers.

Lakers forward Jerome Kersey missed a five-foot jumper and Eddon Campbell pushed Anderson in an attempt to grab the rebound, sending him to the foul line for the winning shots.

The Lakers had a chance to win it at the buzzer, but Nick Van Exel misfired on a 20-foot jumper from the right side.

Voshon Lenard scored 25 points and Tim Hardaway and Jamal Mashburn added 21 apiece for the Heat. Campbell led the Lakers with 24 points and 12 rebounds.

In Boston, Penny Hardaway scored 27 points as the Orlando Magic tightened their grip on a playoff spot with a 104-99 win over the woeful Celtics.

Boston led 99-98 after Eric Williams hit a pair of free throws with 2:15 remaining, but Rony Seikaly, who finished with 17 points, hit a five-footer in the lane to put the Magic on top for good with 39 seconds to go.

In Toronto, Glen Rice scored 27 points and Ricky Pierce added 16, including four key free throws in the final 10 seconds, to lead the Charlotte Hornets to a 102-97 victory over the Raptors.

Damon Stoudamire hit a three-pointer for Toronto with 12.6 seconds left to cut the deficit to one at 98-97. But Pierce scored the final four points on free throws for the win.

Stoudamire scored 29 points and Marcus Camby added 16 and 16 rebounds for Toronto.

In Atlanta, Tyrone Corbin scored 11 of his 17 points in the first quarter as the Hawks opened a 15-point halftime bulge and coasted to a 93-72 thumping of the Dallas Mavericks.

Mookie Blaylock had 20 points and Christian Laettner added 18 for the Hawks, who blew open a nine-point game with an 11-0 run over the final five minutes.

Shawn Bradley scored 17 points, Derek Harper chipped in 11 for Dallas, which fell to 9-23 on the road.

In Philadelphia, Derrick Coleman followed a Jerry Stackhouse miss with the winning basket with 2.4 seconds left to lift the 76ers a 112-110 victory over the New Jersey Nets.

New Jersey's Sam Cassell scored 28 points, but received a technical foul for taunting with 25.7 seconds left.

Stackhouse, who led the Sixers with 31 points, hit the technical foul shot to tie it, 110-110. Philadelphia kept the ball and set up the winning basket by Coleman, facing his former team for the first time since they traded him in 1995.

Kendall Gill led the Nets with 33 points, while Allen Iverson finished with 19 and eight assists for Philadelphia.

In Vancouver, the Grizzlies used a huge first half and clutch free-throw shooting down the stretch to snap a 15-game losing streak with a 108-101 win over the Denver Nuggets.

Bryant Reeves scored 22 of his 31 points in the first half and clutch free-throw shooting down the stretch to snap a 15-game losing streak with a 108-101 win over the Denver Nuggets.

Owens scored six points in overtime as the Kings snapped a seven-game losing streak and made Eddie Jordan a winner in his coaching debut with a 114-110 victory over the San Antonio Spurs. Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf made 5-of-6 free throws in the overtime and Mitch Richmond had 28 points to lead the Kings, who fired coach Garry St. Jean Thursday.

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NORTH
♠ Q 10
♥ 9 7 6
♦ E J 8 4 2
♣ A 4 3

WEST
♠ A 9 8
♥ Q J 8 5 3 2
♦ 3
♣ A 10 8

EAST
♠ A 7 4 3 2
♥ 10
♦ 8 7
♣ E J 9 8 7 2

SOUTH
♠ E J 8 5
♥ A K 4
♦ A 10 6 5
♣ A Q 5

The bidding: WEST NORTH EAST
1NT Pass 3NT Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♠

Some 40 years ago the late Harry Harkavy was declaring three no trump. The dummy was held off-famer B. Jay Becker. Harkavy had eight tricks off the top in three suits, with no semblance of a ninth. His club holding was 10-9 on the table opposite three low cards in hand. Early in the play, Harkavy crossed to dummy and led the ten of

clubs. To his surprise, it was the trick. Impressed with his success, Harkavy immediately ran the nine of clubs. That, too, was allowed to hold. Declarer quickly cashed out 10 tricks, then remarked to partner: "If you had held the eight of clubs as well, I would have been able to run the suit!"

All this serves merely to introduce this deal from the recent European Championship in Portugal, (where Italy won the Open series and France triumphed in the Women's). Three no trump was a popular contract, and was reached at both tables in the France-Germany match.

At one table, Paul Chernia, with eight tricks in eight, tried a spade at trick two in an attempt to steal a trick. West won the ace and had no trouble finding the club switch. The result was down three.

Klaus Reps, declaring for Germany, adopted a different tactic. He won the opening lead in hand with the king of hearts, crossed to dummy with a diamond and led a club to the ace, queen and ace. West, Christian Mack, now tried ace of spades and another, and school was out. Declarer made 11 tricks for a huge gain.

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Countdown begins for Arab Table Tennis Cup

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — President of the Jordan Table Tennis Federation (JTTF) Ismat Al Kurdi Sunday said eleven countries will be taking part in the Arab Table Tennis Cup which will be held at Al Hussein Sports City March 28-April 1.

"Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Palestine, Lebanon, Algeria, Yemen, Sudan, Tunis, Morocco, Syria and Jordan will be competing in the five-day championship," Dr. Kurdi said.

"The deadline for registration has ended and we are satisfied with the number of countries taking part in the event," Dr. Kurdi added.

He said only Egypt and Bahrain have declined to take part citing their players' preoccupation with exams.

Only five countries will take part in women's competition. They are Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, Tunis and Jordan.

The 11-member Jordanian men's team is currently continuing its training following which only three players will be chosen to represent the Kingdom.

The players are Abdul Aziz Rida, Mustafa Rida, Iyad Maknay, Ayman Maknay, Adnan Ofi, Wael Sawalha, Bashar Kurdi, Wissam Baker, Yahya Majdalawi, Shoji Diya and Fadi Znaikat.

The women's team includes Alia Tufaha, Hanadi Tufaha and Hadeel Awad.

The absence of the Egyptian team — considered one of the Arab World's best — boosts the chances of other teams to reach the semi-finals.

Arab champion of 1996 Jordan's Abdul Aziz Rida, Tunisians Hanad Al Hamadi, Mukhtar Mohammad and Basheer Al Alami, Qatar's Aref Abed Ruhman and Jaber Affi, Lebanon's Mohammad Al Habash and Joseph Sbalhoub, Saudi Arabia's Nabil Al Maqhaw and Bandar Amiri, Yemen's Ahmad Al Imad and Syria's Amer Barakat are favourites to reach the semis.

In the women's competition, Tunisia's Sona Tuweini will face Lebanon's Laressa Sho'ab, an Atlanta Olympics competitor, in a long awaited match-up.

Following the Arab Cup the other major event awaiting the Jordanian team is the World Table Tennis Championship in Manchester, England April 23-May 5.

"We will be taking part with six players. Although scoring advanced results is difficult the event is important for gaining much-needed experience," said the JTTF chairman.

Dr. Kurdi said the JTTF would also take part in another regional competition after receiving an invitation from the Cypriot federation to take part in the Cyprus International Junior Championship in May 14.

He added that the JTTF had received donations and support from several companies.

"We would like to send our gratitude to the sponsor of the championship The Computer and Communication System (CCS), Arab Radio and Television (ART) and the Potash Company for their generous contributions for the championship," he added.



Lasse Ottesen from Norway jumps to a world record of 212 metres during a training jump in Planica. The previous record was 209 metres. Ottesen finished the event in ninth place overall (Reuters photo)

Qatar dominates horse show

By Lutfi Zu'bi in Doha
and Roufan Nahhas
in Amman

QATAR DOMINATED the horse show competitions Sunday at the 6th Qatar International Horse Festival.

Sbarar owned by Al Shaqab Stables took first place in Class 1 of the one-year-old category. Najdieh owned by Marbat Al Shaqab came second and Zanoobia owned by Sheikh Nawaf Ben Nasser came third.

In Class 2 of the two-year-old category, Qatar's horses also took the lion's share of the group.

Ajibeb owned by Sheikh Abed Aziz Ben Khaled took first place followed by Alia owned by Marbat Al Shaqab in second place while Farideb owned by Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ben Khaled was third.

Jordan's Al Furat owned by Royal Jordanian Stables took first place in the supreme champion competition.

Imperial Farouq owned by Marbat Al Shaqab followed in second place while Ansata owned by Abdullah Ben Nasser was third.

In Class 3, Qatar's Ansata

Marha owned by Sheikh Abed Aziz Ben Khaled came first. Bahia owned by United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan was second and Rayaneh owned by Sheikh Abdulaziz Ben Khaled, was third place.

In Class 4, Battar owned by Sheikh Nawaf came first followed by Shamekh Al Shaqab owned by Marbat Al Shaqab in second place while Hazoul Al Shaqab owned by Marbat Al Shaqab came third.

The horse show for Class 6 three-year-old fillies begins today.

Twelve Jordanian horses took part in the festival's endurance race. The only Jordanian participant to finish the 42 kilometre event was Salameh Al Saud who came in twentieth.

The competition offered total prize money of \$200,000.

Eighteen Jordanian horses are taking part in the different events of the 6th Qatar International Horse Festival which includes the endurance race, the horse racing competition and the horse show.

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Jordan plays Syria today in last friendly before World Cup qualifiers

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

THE KINGDOM'S national soccer team meet their Syrian counterparts Sunday afternoon in the final friendly international before the Asian Group 3 World Cup qualifiers kick off April 8.

The game will be the eighth for Jordan's team whose record in training matches includes three defeats, two goalless draws and two wins.

The team last played Syria last Sunday in Irbid drawing 0-0. Head coach Mohammad Awad now hopes to finalise the lineup with less than two weeks remaining for the kick-off of the qualifiers against Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

"We hope to score a win. Both teams had many scoring chances when we last played last week. The players morale has improved after better results and we hope to build on that since this is the final match before the qualifiers," Awad said.

Team captain Jamal Abu Abed said he was hopeful the team would do well in the qualifiers.

A veteran of the Kingdom's soccer scene, Abu Abed noted this national team was different from others in many aspects.

"The players are experienced, have good fitness and have trained well

after lots of friendly matches," he said.

The Jordanian team's best results were in Muscat where they beat Oman 2-0 and 4-1 on the third leg of the team's training camps abroad.

Prior to that, Jordan had played two matches against Lebanon losing 1-0 in Beirut and drawing 0-0 in Amman. Against the Iraqi team Jordan twice lost 1-0 in Baghdad.

The match against Syria will be the final chance to test tactics and form since the Iraqi and Qatari teams lately informed the soccer federation that they would not be able to play in Amman next week.

The Syrian team had last played in Saudi Arabia where they lost 3-0 and drew 1-1 with the Saudi junior team.

Syria's Group 2 qualifiers are against Iran, the Maldives and Kyrgyzstan.

Thirty-six Asian countries will contest the first round World Cup qualifiers and have been divided into ten groups.

Group 1: Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Taiwan.

Group 2: Iran, Syria, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan.

Group 3: United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain.

Group 4: Japan, Oman, Nepal, Macao.

Group 5: Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Yemen, Cambodia.

Group 6: South Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong.

Group 7: Kuwait, Lebanon, Singapore.

Group 8: China, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Tajikistan.

Group 9: Iraq, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Philippines.

Group 10: Qatar, India, Sri Lanka.

The 10 groups winners will qualify for the second round where the teams will be divided into two groups.

The first two from each group will then contest the Asian Finals.

The first three qualify directly for the 1998 World Cup in France while the winner of a play-off between the fourth team and the Oceania Zone winner will also qualify.

Sunday's initial lineup of the Kingdom's team includes Mu'taz Rishet, Yousef Ammoun, Mohammad Mahadin, Amjad Taher, Hussein Shunaineh, Faisal Ibrahim, Subhi Suleiman, Jamal Abu Abed, Adnan Awad, Nari Yaday and Aref Hussein.

The team also includes Ahmad Abu Nasouh, Mohammad Abu Dawud, Mohammad Khaz'ali, Abdillahi Abu Zame'h, Isam Mahmoud, Munir Abu Hantash, Bassam Al Khatib, Ahmad Khalil, Ja'far Hamid, Hassanoud Sheikh and Jiryes Tador.

Syrian Television is expected to televise the match at 3 p.m.

Hingis pushed to 3 sets in Lipton championships

KEY BISCAYNE (R) — Top seed Martina Hingis avoided her first defeat of the year with a three-set victory over Canadian Patricia Hy-Boulais in the second round of the Lipton Championships on a rainy Friday.

The Swiss teen sensation was outplayed in the first set — a rarity this year — but rallied for a 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 victory over 59th-ranked Hy-Boulais to push her 1997 record to 21-0.

The 16-year-old Hingis, who received a first-round bye, lost her opening match here in 1996. A year later,

Hingis will depose Steffi Graf as the top-ranked player in the world at the conclusion of this tournament, win or lose.

"It's a great feeling to be the best tennis player in the world," said a rather immodest Hingis, winner of all four tournaments she has played this year including the Australian Open for her first major title. "Everybody wants to play me now. Everybody wants to beat me."

Graf, sidelined by a knee injury, was unable to defend her title here. She will lose her number one ranking

March 31, ending her latest stint of 94 consecutive weeks at the top.

Hy-Boulais played a solid, relatively error-free opening set to keep Hingis off balance.

In the next two sets Hingis improved tremendously on her delivery, which helped squash the threat to her unblemished 1997 record.

After dropping her serve three times in the first set, Hingis was broken just once in the second set and not at all in the decider.

Heavy rain played havoc with the Friday's afternoon schedule, keeping all the

seeded men off the courts.

In early first-round action, American Chris Woodruff played precision tennis for 74 minutes to pick up the baseline game of

Germany's Alex Radulescu 6-4 6-4. Canadian qualifier Sebastian Larue, ranked 110 in the world, bounced 73rd-ranked Australian doubles star Mark Woodforde 6-2 6-4.

Sweden's Magnus Larsson rebounded from a second-set collapse to reach the second round with a 7-5, 0-6, 7-5 victory over Dutchman Paul Haarhuis.

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Russia wants to enter EU

NATO partners welcome result of Helsinki summit

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russia wants to enter the European Union (EU), President Boris Yeltsin said Saturday at the end of a visit to Helsinki for a summit with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Mr. Yeltsin said he wanted the world to "recognise Russia as a fully-fledged European state. We are also ready to enter the European Union."

He was speaking at a press conference in Helsinki broadcast on Russian NTV Television.

At their two-day summit, Mr. Clinton and Mr. Yeltsin agreed to disagree on North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) enlargement, but forged an agreement on five issues touching on European security, arms control and economic help for Russia.

Mr. Yeltsin held talks with Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari on Saturday and praised Finland for its non-aligned policies, before returning to Moscow.

NATO members and countries wishing to join brushed over Russia's continued opposition to the Western alliance's expansion Saturday, saying their cause had moved forward at the U.S.-Russian summit.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl welcomed the outcome of the meeting between Mr. Clinton and Mr. Yeltsin that ended Friday in Helsinki and said he was confident talks would enable an accord on NATO expansion and a NATO-Russia charter by the time the alliance meets in Madrid in early July.

He also praised the agreements on nuclear disarmament and Russia's integration into international economic and financial institutions, a communique said.

French Defence Minister Charles Millon said the two-day summit showed that

"we are on the right track for an accord between NATO and Russia."

"We must continue to explain to Boris Yeltsin that the reform of the Atlantic alliance and its enlargement have the objective of reinforcing security in the continent," Mr. Millon said in an interview with Europe 1 radio.

The foreign ministers of the Czech Republic and Poland, two of the countries most likely to be invited to join the new NATO, said the summit was a first step in the reinforcement of stability and security in Europe.

"We could not expect Boris Yeltsin to announce to Bill Clinton that Russia is happy about the enlargement of NATO," Josef Zeleniec and Dariusz Rosati said Friday.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs said the summit had strengthened European security.

Meanwhile, the three ex-Soviet republics in the Baltics — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — said Saturday they were encouraged in their aim of joining NATO by the results of the summit.

Latvian Foreign Minister Valdis Birkavs, quoted by Interfax news agency, said he believed that "no deals behind the back of the Baltic states" were cut during the two-day summit, which ended Friday.

Latvia can press ahead with its aim to join the military alliance, he said.

"That is the most pleasant news from Helsinki and the realisation of the only hope I laid on the meeting," he said.

"The meeting on the whole brought definite clarity to the issue of NATO enlargement and security guarantees for the Baltic states," he said.



VIOLENCE IN HEBRON: A Palestinian policeman raises his hand to stop a Palestinian boy from throwing a rock at Israeli soldiers during fierce clashes in the West Bank town of Hebron on Saturday (Reuters photo)

Canada arrests Saudi suspect

OTTAWA (AFP) — A Saudi national suspected in last year's bombing of a U.S. barracks in Saudi Arabia has been arrested in Ottawa, news reports said on Saturday.

The Toronto Sun newspaper quoted government sources as saying that Hani Abd Rahim Al Sayegh was arrested Tuesday on suspicion of being engaged in terrorism and being a threat to the security of Canada.

Fahad Shehri, 21, another suspect in the bombing which claimed 19 lives, was arrested in Ottawa in December.

He is due to face an immigration hearing on Wednesday to determine whether he should be deported to Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Shehri is seeking political asylum in Canada, claiming that he would be executed if he were returned to his homeland. Police and security officials refused to comment Saturday on the arrest of Mr. Sayegh.

Iraq hails oil deal with Russia as defiance of U.N. embargo

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq on Saturday hailed an accord signed with Russia to develop a huge oilfield as an act of defiance towards the U.N. sanctions and a triumph for the independent policies of the two countries.

"The accord, over which all honourable men should rejoice, will be implemented during the embargo," Oil Minister Amer Mohammad Rasheed said on state television after Friday's accord.

"The accord was achieved thanks to the independent political will of the two countries," said General Rasheed, who signed the deal with Russian Energy Minister Pyotr Rodionov.

The Russian minister said the 23-year accord for the second phase of development at qumrah oilfield in southern Iraq will be implemented regardless of the U.N. embargo in force since Baghdad's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"The agreement will be implemented independently of the lifting of economic sanctions," Mr. Rodionov told reporters.

"The accord will be implemented immediately after the two countries' governments and parliaments approve it and after they exchange documents of approval," he added, to loud applause from officials on both sides.

Moscow will "begin by producing the necessary equipment, while Iraq will start, in coordination with Russia, to carry out the necessary work on its territory," Mr. Rodionov said.

But it was unclear at what point Russia would be in technical violation of the embargo. There was no immediate reaction from the United Nations or the United States, a strong advocate of keeping the sanctions in place.

Qumrah, which lies west of the southern capital of Basra, has proven reserves of almost 15 billion barrels, making it the largest in Iraq, according to unofficial estimates.

The government daily Al Jumhuriya ran a front-page headline in red declaring that the accord was for the development of "the biggest oilfield in the world."

Russia has been working to have the United Nations lift the embargo, which has been partially eased in an oil-for-food deal launched in December. Iraq was a major

Soviet trading partner and owes Russia \$10 to \$16 billion.

The Iraqi oil minister said that "Russian firms will win a good part ... of the numerous oil projects" under study.

Other oil accords are pending "with friendly companies from France and China," he said, adding that "priority will be given to countries and companies which adopted a positive attitude toward Iraq during the unjust embargo."

Friday's accord was the first of its kind announced between Iraq and a foreign country since the embargo went into effect, although Baghdad has held negotiations with several foreign companies on developing oil deposits.

Gen. Rasheed said there is an estimated "seven to eight billion barrels of reserves for the second phase of the Qumrah oilfield with daily production of close to 600,000 barrels."

Iraq, which has proven crude reserves of more than 110 billion barrels, expects to earn receipts of more than \$70 billion over the contract period, he said.

The first phase of the field's development was carried out by the Soviet Union during the early 1970s, after the nationalisation of Iraq's oil industry.

"The reserve of Qumrah oilfield second stage, which we have signed as a contract is approximately seven to eight billion barrels of oil. The production will be 600,000 barrels a day and the total revenue for Iraq over 23 years would be approximately \$70 billion," Gen. Rasheed said.

Mr. Rodionov put cost of constructing the project at \$3.5 billion without saying how that amount would be paid and by whom.

The Russian minister said on Thursday the deal would need a few weeks before it could be signed.

"We had the conclusion that we need several weeks to resolve obstacles... but the real time was far less than that," he said after signing the pact.

Mr. Rasheed described the contract as "strategic and huge," said it was "big historic event" to "translate into deed President Saddam Hussein's directive that the first deal to develop an oilfield should be with Russia."

Clean water is a basic right — forum

MARRAKESH (AFP) — The First World Water Forum appealed here Saturday for access to clean water and sanitation to be recognised as basic human rights.

In the watershed "Declaration of Marrakesh," the forum called for the establishment of "an effective mechanism for management of shared waters, to support and preserve ecosystems, and to encourage the efficient use of water."

It also called for gender equity issues in water to be addressed.

In response to what it called "demonstrated needs and recommended actions," the forum decided to mandate the World Water Council to launch an initiative of study, consultation and analysis that will lead to a "global vision of water, life and the environment in the next century."

The conclusions of this study will be presented at the Second World Water Forum to be held on world water day in 2000 (see page 4).

The First World Water Forum brought together representatives of countries from five continents for the two-day conference.

Closing the conference, UNESCO Director General Federico Mayor said that water should be "at the top of our priorities. We must act without delay."

The United Nations was preparing to celebrate World Water Day in Marrakesh on Saturday night under the theme: "Will there be enough fresh water on earth?"

The forum intends to lay the groundwork for a global water strategy in a bid to prevent shortages sparking conflicts in the world's driest regions.

Hundreds of specialists and representatives from governments, development banks, U.N. agencies, non-governmental organisations and the private sector are taking part in the meeting, which hopes to work out a draft world water charter.

But it faces major problems. Water consumption increased sixfold between 1900 and 1995, twice the rate of population growth, according to the World Meteorological Organisation.

Population growth and irrigation is chiefly to blame, according to the forum.



Bush plans sky jump

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Former President George Bush will jump out of an airplane Tuesday in a parachute leap at the U.S. military base in Yuma, Arizona, his press office in Houston said. Bush, 72, will jump with the Golden Knights, an elite army parachute unit, said spokesman Jim Grath in a telephone interview. Bush, who was president from 1989-1993, made parachute jumps during World War II, said Grath. The spokesman said that Bush was exercising to train for the jump. "He is looking forward to it," said Grath.

'Ugly' suspects prone to be 'guilty'

LONDON (AFP) — New research suggested that ugly suspects with "stereotypical criminal features" are more likely to be found guilty than good-looking defendants. In an experiment across Britain, the BBC and the Daily Telegraph newspaper reported part of a fictitious court case in which the defendant was ugly to half the country, and replaced him with a good-looking suspect for the other half. Of 60,000 people who phoned the BBC, 40 per cent were convinced that the man with small, deep-set eyes, asymmetrical face, broken nose and thick-set build, was guilty, compared with 29 per cent who thought the better looking man had committed the crime. In the Daily Telegraph, which published pictures of the suspects, findings showed that a "criminal face" was one fifth more likely to be convicted.

Greenspan to marry TV reporter

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Federal reserve chairman Alan Greenspan will marry television reporter Andrea Mitchell on April 6 after a 12-year courtship, the Fed said. Greenspan, 71, asked Mitchell, who is about two decades younger, to marry him at Christmas and she agreed immediately. The couple have invited a host of celebrities to a private ceremony. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is planning a reception before the ceremony while World Bank President John Wolfensohn is also planning a party after the wedding, the Wall Street Journal reported. As a joke, Mitchell's friends printed \$100 bills with photos of the two that they will use as confetti. But there would not be many wedding presents: Fed rules require them to return any present over \$20 from bankers or other banned givers, said Fed spokesman Bob Moore. Any gifts worth more than \$250 must be reported and made public.

Canadian star under observation

TORONTO (AFP) — Canadian Aboriginal star Graham Greene was in hospital Friday following a reported stand-off with police, CBC Television said. According to CBC, police officers who were responding to a call found Greene barricaded inside his home in Keswick, north of Toronto, late Thursday. Police said Greene was cooperative and was not armed. He was taken to York county hospital for psychiatric observation, said police sources. Internationally, Greene is probably best known for his academy award-winning performance in the movie Dances With Wolves. Neither police nor hospital officials would say how long Greene was expected to be in hospital.

Ben Laden claims Pakistani supporters in anti-U.S. jihad

LONDON (Agencies) — Saudi dissident Osama Ben Laden claimed Saturday that he had secured the support of thousands of Pakistanis for his jihad — holy war — against U.S. troops in the Middle East, it was reported here.

"Now the Muslim Nation understands the truth and Pakistanis have allied themselves to us to expel the Americans: Pakistani religious leaders are issuing fatwa against them," he told the Independent newspaper at his 2,500-metre high hideout in Afghanistan.

He was said to have produced wall posters and pictures of graffiti in Karachi indicating support for the ousting of U.S. troops.

The allegation will cause deep concern to American troops in Saudi Arabia where tens of thousands of Pakistanis live as immigrant workers.

Adding to a statement earlier this month when he warned of stepped up resistance against U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia and Israeli forces in the Israeli-occupied territories, Mr. Ben Laden also claimed some members of the Saudi royal family agreed with his demand to expel Americans from the Gulf.

And he admitted for the first time that his guerrillas had fought street battles against U.S. forces during the United Nations mission to Somalia.

Mr. Ben Laden has been stripped of his Saudi nationality and is considered by Washington as a principal supporter of extremists in the Middle East.

According to Arab diplomatic and Western intelligence sources quoted by Reuters, Mr. Ben Laden has gained a foothold in Yemen.

The sources said an advance party of his supporters had established cells in Yemen, which shares a loose, disputed border with Saudi Arabia.

They would not say whether they had evidence that Mr. Ben Laden himself had arrived in Yemen or was still in Afghanistan, his base since last year when he was forced to leave Sudan after four years under Saudi pressure in Khartoum.

Mr. Ben Laden financed and commanded thousands of so-called Arab Afghans — warriors from Saudi Arabia and other Arab states — in the 1980s Afghan war against the Soviet Union.

U.S. officials in Washington last October branded him as a prime suspect in two deadly bombings in Saudi Arabia which killed 24 U.S. servicemen and two Indians and injured more than 400 others.

Mr. Ben Laden has denied involvement in the bombings but said they were warnings that the United States should withdraw its forces from Saudi Arabia.

Four Saudis were executed for the first blast in Riyadh in November 1995. Saudi and U.S. investigations into the second bombing in eastern Saudi Arabia last June are continuing. No evidence connecting Mr. Ben Laden to that blast has been published.

The U.S. embassy in Riyadh repeatedly warns the 35,000 Americans in the kingdom, about 5,000 of them military, to remain on high alert against further extremist action.

The four executed Saudis, three of them Arab Afghans, said in televised confessions before they were beheaded that they had been influenced by Mr. Ben Laden and other exiled opponents of the kingdom's ruling house of Saud.

An Arabic newspaper published in London, Al Quds Al Arabi, said last week exiled opponents of the Saudi royal family had accused Sanaa of handing over 12 opposition members of the movement led by Mr. Ben Laden but the Yemeni government denied it.

It said relations between Yemen, the Middle East's poorest country, and Saudi Arabia, its richest, were moving towards a new period of tension after high-level visits failed to reach solutions to disputed issues. These included a 60-year-old argument over their ill-defined border and lifting restrictions on the return of Yemeni labour to the kingdom.

Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab states expelled 700,000 Yemeni workers during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis because of Sanaa's sympathy with Baghdad in the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The same newspaper in November quoted Mr. Ben Laden as saying he was considering moving to Yemen, irrespective of whether the Yemeni government agreed.

"Iraq is out of the question. I would rather die than live in a European state. I have to live in a Muslim country and so the choice is between Yemen and Afghanistan," Al Quds Al Arabi quoted him as saying in an interview.

Major battles to regain election initiative

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major battled to regain the initiative on Saturday in Britain's marathon election campaign after a bruising week of sleaze allegations, abysmal opinion polls and parliamentary slanging matches.

Mr. Major, bidding to give the ruling Conservatives their fifth election win in a row, urged his Labour Party foes "to get away from dirty tricks and onto the real issues."

"Stop hiding behind trivia and innuendo," he told the opposition party that bookmakers make bet favourites to win their first election since 1979.

Mr. Major had promised a "gruelling but fun" campaign when launching the May 1 poll on Monday and eagerly took to his trademark soapbox to woo voters disillusioned after 18 years of Conservative rule and apparently eager for change.

But the opposition Labour Party, led by the centrist Tony Blair who has dumped much of its socialist dogma, promptly surged into a 28 point opinion poll lead.

Mr. Major celebrated unem-



John Major

ployment figures showing that the jobless rate had dropped to the lowest level in the nineties.

But the Conservatives' new poster campaign about the buoyant economy — "Britain is booming, — don't let Labour blow it" — was swiftly derailed in a bitter row over influence-peddling by lawmakers accused of asking questions for cash in parliament.

Mr. Major and Mr. Blair traded bitter blows after the prime minister ordered the closure of parliament before



Tony Blair

the election. This effectively buried publication of a report by an ethics watchdog into the alleged "cash-for-questions" scandal.

Mr. Major told Mr. Blair: "You have traded in double standards from the moment you took office" and he even told centrist Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown: "You end as pious and pompous as you have been throughout this parliament."

A vitriolic Blair, determined to maintain the initiative, accused Mr. Major of broken promises, slippery evasion